

Hafa Adai!

Fama, Santiago win Bridge Capital's CNMI Got Talent 2021. PAGE 2
Army Corps, CNMI agree to end Beach Road feasibility study. PAGE 3

\$1

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Impeachment resolution pre-filed

» **Torres stresses AG, FBI have not find illegal acts on his part; says Democrats-led House wasting time, taxpayers' money instead of working together to help the people during global crisis**

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER



Babauta



Torres

Rep. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan), who chairs the House of Representatives Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee that is looking into Gov. Ralph DLG Torres' expenditures of public funds and travels, pre-filed Friday a House resolution impeaching Torres for alleged commission of felonies, corruption, and neglect of duty.

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See **TORRES** on Page 4

NMI reports 7th COVID-related death

» **1,212 recoveries; 15 hospitalized**

By **JOSHUA SANTOS**
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REPORTER

One COVID-19 death was reported last Saturday,

15 are currently hospitalized due to COVID-19, with one of them on a ventilator, and a total of 258 new positive cases were reported from

Dec. 16 to 18.

In a news release last Saturday, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. and the

See **DEATH** on Page 4

New entry and quarantine protocols

» **COVID-19 Community Center, COVID Care Team to serve Saipan residents**

Effective today, Dec. 20, 2021, the CNMI will be implementing new entry protocols and new quar-

antine protocols, and will be opening the COVID-19 Community Center at the Kobler-

See **NEW** on Page 4

Sale of IPI assets pushed back to end of Jan.

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The U.S. District Court for

the NMI has granted Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC's request to extend the

See **SALE** on Page 4

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:

- Red: Least safe
- Orange
- Yellow
- Blue
- Green: Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

5 DAYS
BEFORE CHRISTMAS

MR. MAGICMAN

Neil Fama performs a magic trick for the judges during Bridge Capital's CNMI Got Talent 2021 at the Pacific Islands Club Saipan's Charley's Cabaret last Friday. Fama's routine featured illusions using boxes, balls, a deck of cards, and Rubik's Cubes, Fama won first place in the 16-and-older category, taking home \$2,000. Fama is now a two-time winner of CNMI Got Talent, taking home first and the "Governor's Choice" award in 2017.

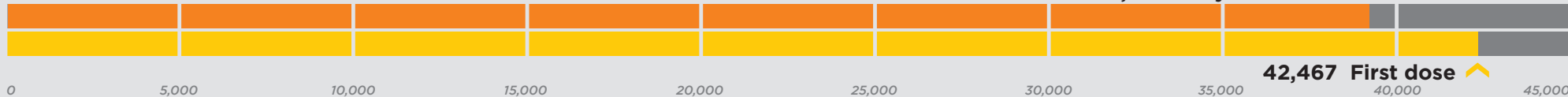
Story on Page 2

JOSHUA SANTOS



CURRENT COVID-19 VACCINATIONS

39,349 Fully vaccinated



Source: vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/

INSIDE



NATION

Hospitals across the country are struggling to cope with burn-out among doctors, nurses and other workers.

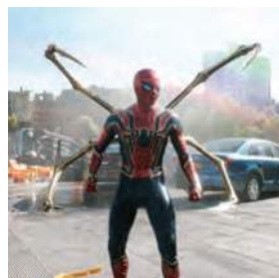
PAGE 12



ASIA

Typhoon Odette deaths in Philippines exceeds 100 as several mayors appeal for help.

PAGE 13



LIFE & STYLE

"Spider-Man: No Way Home" grossed \$50 million in Thursday previews alone, a stunning start.

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GOT A NEWS TIP?

TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com



Jody Jordahl, vice president and chief investment officer for Bridge Capital, joins on stage the winners of Bridge Capital's CNMI Got Talent 2021 last Friday at the Pacific Islands Club Saipan's Charley's Cabaret.

JOSHUA SANTOS

Fama, Santiago win Bridge Capital's CNMI Got Talent 2021

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Magician Neil Fama and singer Donato Santiago Jr. are the winners of Bridge Capital's CNMI Got Talent 2021 last Friday at the Pacific Islands Club Saipan's Charley's Cabaret.

The two first-placers won \$2,000 each, with Santiago taking home another \$1,500 for winning the "Most Christmas-y" award. There were a total of 17 performances, and two categories: 16-and-over/adult and 16-and-under.

First and second runners-up in the adult category was dance group "Class of 670" and Dandan Middle School teacher and juggler Simon Necesito, who took home \$1,500 and \$1,000 respectively. "Class of 670" took home another \$1,500 for winning the "Founder's Choice" award, and Necesito took home another \$1,500 for winning the "Community Choice Award."

First and second runner-up in the 16-and-under category were singers Jane Mozunder and Bernice Sabino, who took home \$1,500 and \$1,000 respectively.

Bridge Capital LLC said last Friday that Gov. Ralph DLG Torres was unfortunately unable to attend the event, and as such there was no "Governor's Choice" award this year. To make up for this, Bridge Capital announced an additional winner of the \$1,500 "Founder's Choice" award, which went to singer and performer James Selepeo.

Jody Jordahl, vice president and chief investment officer for Bridge Capital, said Friday that he has been involved with Bridge Capital and the talent show for seven years now, and

that this was the first-ever year where auditioning was opened up to past winners.

Jordahl said that over 25 people auditioned this year and "it's just a difficult choice" to narrow down the performances to a final 17. He said he and Bridge Capital would more than enjoy having all performers come out, but said that doing so would risk the show running past three to four hours. A selection committee that includes Bridge Capital owners choose who makes the final show.

Despite this being Bridge Capital's 11th year of hosting this event, Jordahl is still "blown away by the amount of talent that's here in the CNMI."

"We've been doing this now for 11 years. We've just seen so many amazing acts come through, and it's so varied as well— you've got magicians, you've got dancers, you've got singers, you've got opera singers, instrumentalists. ... So again, we're just blown away by the amount of talent that's here in the CNMI [and] are lucky to be a part of it," he said. During intermissions, Bridge Capital held 10 raffles, selecting winners from a pool consisting of people who tuned in virtually to last Friday's show through Zoom. Around \$15,000 in prizes were given away last Friday. These prizes included cash, 60-inch and 65-inch flat-screen TVs, an Apple iPhone 13 Pro Max, Apple iPad, and Apple Watch.

Last Friday's event host Brad Cleven asked winners to stop by Bridge Capital's main office in Garapan to claim their prizes.

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Army Corps, CNMI agree to end Beach Road feasibility study

AFTER SIX YEARS OF PUBLIC SERVICE

Kevin Bautista leaves press secretary position to take up NMC directorship

Gov. Ralph DLG. Torres announced yesterday the resignation of press secretary Kevin Bautista, who will be accepting a position as director of the Office of the President/chief of staff at the Northern Marianas College.

"Kev has been with me for six years from my time as lieutenant governor, and I am very grateful for the hard work, dedication, and service that he has provided in his years working for me and our Commonwealth. I wish him the best on his future endeavors, as I know he will continue to be working for the people of our Commonwealth in his new capacity as chief of staff at NMC. He is an individual committed to the betterment of the CNMI, and it will be great to see his skills, knowledge, and leadership alongside the hardworking faculty and staff at NMC, an institution that I cherish. Ultimately, although we are sad to see him go, I look forward to what he will accomplish at NMC for our students," said Torres.

Bautista submitted his resignation on Dec. 6, 2021, with his last day today, Dec. 20, 2021.

"I thank Gov. Torres for his warm friendship, his trust, and the opportunity to serve him and the Commonwealth these last six years. This is truly bittersweet because I'm

sad to be leaving him, my terrific colleagues at the Office of the Governor, the Cabinet, and all the friends I have made on Capital Hill in the various departments and autonomous agencies. At the same time,



Bautista

I am excited for the opportunity to serve NMC and their talented staff to take our Proa to the next level," Bautista said.

"In 2015, I graduated from the University of Michigan with a political science degree, and I didn't know if I was going to come back home or go to Washington, D.C. for work. However, Gov. Torres gave this Filipino American kid from Saipan an opportunity to come back home and serve. He is no ordinary politician because he is someone anyone can talk to and have a conversation without the formalities. We accomplished a lot together in six years through the creation of policies that grew our economy, saved the pensions for thousands of CNMI retirees, drafted meaningful policies with federal partners,

See KEVIN on Page 4

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At the request of the CNMI government, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Honolulu District, has agreed to halt the feasibility study for Coastal Storm Risk Management on Beach Road on Saipan, which is threatened by coastal erosion.

The CNMI had preferred natural and nature-based solutions to mitigate the threats but the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has determined that this could not be done as economically as a hybrid seawall, prompting the CNMI government to ask the U.S. Army Corps to just terminate the study.

minate the study.

According to a U.S. Army Corps news release last Saturday, long-term coastal erosion threatens Beach Road, a primary territorial highway and main public thoroughfare on the island of Saipan. The feasibility study assessed coastal storm risk management actions that would reduce tropical storm-induced damages as well as long-term erosion to Beach Road, a seaward pedestrian walkway, and the surrounding infrastructure and property.

Based on evaluation and comparison of the alternatives, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recommended the construction of a hybrid seawall as the Tentatively Selected Plan and National Economic Development plan with a federal interest.

The proposed plan would reduce risk to Beach Road from coastal storms and sea level rise over the project life. However, CNMI preferred natural and nature-based solutions to mitigate the threats. This could not be done as economically as the hybrid seawall; therefore, CNMI provided USACE with a Notice to

Terminate the study in September 2021.

"We remain dedicated to an ongoing productive partnership with CNMI, and I am hopeful that we can continue to assist the CNMI achieve their objectives through the Garapan Watershed Assessment and future studies and projects," said commander Lt. Col Eric Marshall, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Honolulu District.

To view the termination report, go to <https://www.poh.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Civil-Works-Projects/Saipan-Beach-Road/> (PR)

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EARN PACIFICPOINTS

IT&E

House Ethics Committee members sworn in, adopt rules

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

Six members of the seven-person House of Representatives Special Standing Committee on Official Conduct and Ethics that will look into an ethics complaint against Rep. Edwin K. Propst (D-Saipan) were sworn in during the Committee's first meeting Friday afternoon and adopted their rules.

Rep. Donald M. Manglona (Ind-Rota), who chairs the Ethics Committee, was sworn in, along with five other members: Reps. Angel A. Demapan (R-Saipan), Joseph Lee

Pan T. Guerrero (R-Saipan), Patrick H. San Nicolas (R-Tinian), Corina L. Magofna (D-Saipan), and Leila C. Staffler (D-Saipan).

Rep. Sheila J. Babauta (D-Saipan) was absent but excused. She will be sworn-in at a later time.

During the public comment portion of the meeting, Grace "Pitu" Sablan Vaiagae, who is a counselor and an advocate for the rights of abused women, thanked the Ethics Committee for giving her the opportunity to stand before them.

"I am here today to stand in and thank you all for your courage, for your bravery and, most importantly,

for uniting and coming together, and putting this Ethics Committee together for one sole purpose—of serving our people," Vaiagae said.

It was Vaiagae who filed the ethics complaint against Propst last Nov. 9 over allegations that he had sex with several underaged women approximately 20 years ago when he was still a teacher at Marianas High School and an employee at the Northern Marianas College. Propst has denied the allegations.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

Former AG Kosack passes away

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

Former CNMI attorney general Rexford C. Kosack passed away Thursday in his house on Saipan after a battle with pancreatic cancer. He was 68.

In response to *Saipan Tribune's* inquiry, former Superior Court associate judge Timothy H. Bellas said last night that he was in the same room with Kosack when he passed away.

"Quite obviously, I was very emo-

tional when he passed away. I lost my best friend but the Commonwealth lost a wonderful member of the community," Bellas said.

Bellas said he is here on island and came with Kosack and the latter's wife to help close his (Kosack) law office, among other things.

He said he is staying in Kosack's house and was with him every day from the day they arrived last Nov. 24 from the U.S. mainland.

Rexford Kosack and his wife, Clarie S. Kosack, have two

children—Vanessa Airen Kosack and Nicolas Alexander Kosack.

Bellas said that Kosack first came to Saipan in the early '80s to work as chief of the Office of the Attorney General's Criminal Division. Kosack then went to California and recruited Bellas to work as a member of the OAG's Criminal Division. Bellas arrived on Saipan on April 4, 1982.

The former judge said Kosack was without a doubt an excellent lawyer and his best friend.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com



Kosack

TORRES

From Page 1

Torres described Friday as "a dark day" for the islands, saying that Babauta and the Democrat-led House of Representatives are posturing and choosing to use their time to pursue "even more false and baseless charges after months of wasteful spending of time and resources," instead of working together to help people during this unprecedented global crisis.

Torres pointed out in a statement that neither Attorney General Edward Manibusan nor the Federal Bureau of Investigation have issued any findings of fact of corruption or illegal acts on his part as governor.

As of yesterday afternoon, Babauta's House Resolution 22-14 is supported by seven other Democrat representatives, two Republicans,

and two independent lawmakers. The seven Democrats who signed the resolution are Reps. Christina E. Sablan, Edwin K. Propst, Vicente C. Camacho, Richard T. Lizama, Denita K. Yangetmai, Corina Magofna, and Leila C. Staffler. The two Republicans who signed the resolution are vice speaker Blas Jonathan T. Attao and Rep. Ralph N. Yumul. Reps. Joel C. Camacho and Donald M. Manglona, both independents, also signed the resolution.

As of Friday afternoon, House Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez and Joseph A. Flores, both independents, have not signed the resolution, along with Rep. Sheila J. Babauta (D-Saipan). The five others who have not signed the resolution are Republicans Roy A. Ada, Patrick H. San Nicolas, Angel A. Demapan, Joseph Lee Pan T. Guerrero, and John Paul P. Sablan.

The impeachment consists of six

articles:

■ Article I: Commission of felony, theft of utility services.

■ Article II: Commission of felony, theft.

■ Article III: Corruption, unlawful first-class and business-class travel.

■ Article IV: Corruption, misuse of government resources.

■ Article V: Neglect of duty, negligence during crisis.

■ Article VI: Neglect of duty, contempt of the Legislature.

In a statement issued after pre-filing her resolution, Babauta said it is their constitutional right as bona fide, indigenous registered voters of the NMI to partake in a democratic review of actions that the government and its officials, exercise in the course of their duties.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

SALE

From Page 1

stay on the limited receivership granted in favor of U.S.A. Fanter Corp. in its breach-of-contract lawsuit against the casino investor.

Last Friday, during the hearing on IPI's motion for the court to accept the \$2.45 million "supersedes" bond to stay the limited receivership, Chief Judge Ramona Manglona said the district court is satisfied with IPI's report and grants the stay on the limited receivership until Jan. 31, 2022. The sale was supposed to happen at the end of this month. Manglona informed the parties that she would issue an official written order on her ruling.

She ordered the parties to return to court for a status conference on Jan.

14, 8:30am.

Meanwhile, court heard from the receiver and other creditors and gave notice that it will address the creditor's motion at a later time.

According to a *Saipan Tribune* archives, IPI, through counsel Kevin T. Abikoff, filed notice with the court stating that it has secured a "superseas" bond in the agreed-upon amount of \$2,450,000, secured by Suretech Insurance Co. as surety on behalf of IPI as principal.

Abikoff stated that pursuant to parties' stipulation regarding the motion to stay judgment pending appeal, IPI now requests approval of its superseas bond in the amount of \$2.45 million, which will stay execution on the judgment pending appeal.

The lawyer said that, as USA Fanter's judgment is now sufficiently

secured pending appeal, USA Fanter will not be substantially injured by a stay in the limited receivership.

"IPI submits that the balance of hardships favors a stay of the receivership to avoid the sale of IPI's property at depressed prices—which would harm the interests of IPI as well as of its other creditors—and to allow IPI's arguments to be fully heard on appeal, without incurring the extreme prejudice of having its assets sold by a receiver," Abikoff said.

According to court documents, on Feb. 12, 2021, the court entered a judgment in favor of USA Fanter against IPI for a mechanic's lien in the amount of \$2,089,345.28.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

Temporary closure of Guma Hustisia extended

The NMI Supreme Court has ordered the continued and temporary closure of the Guma Hustisia in response to the rising surge in confirmed positive COVID-19 cases in the CNMI. The temporary closure is from Monday, Dec. 20, 2021, through Thursday, Dec. 23, 2021.

The NMI Supreme Court issued the directive on Dec. 18, 2021, saying that bail, initial appearance, arraignment,

family protection, emergency and time-sensitive hearings may be set consistent with Supreme Court Order 2021-ADM-0019-MSC (Amended COVID-19 Order No. 16).

Kotten Tinian and Centron Hustisia will remain open, for limited purposes.

To access the most recent Supreme Court COVID-19 Order, visit www.cnmilaw.org. (PR)

NEW

From Page 1

ville Youth Center to serve the community of Saipan.

In a news release yesterday, it said the new quarantine protocols were effective immediately, while the new entry protocols will be effective today, Dec. 20, 2021.

The statement said the changes are being made considering that approximately 91.3% of the CNMI's eligible population are now fully vaccinated, combined with the expansion of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine booster shot eligibility to 16- and 17-year-olds.

"The safety of the residents of the CNMI remains the top priority of the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.

Under the new entry protocols, all fully vaccinated inbound travelers will be tested for COVID-19 on arrival starting today, Dec. 20, 2021. This applies to children ineligible for a COVID-19 vaccine but are residing in a fully vaccinated household.

Specimen collection will be conducted at the port of entry. While waiting for the results of their COVID-19 test, the traveler must quarantine at home or lodging until results are received.

In addition to being fully vaccinated, a qualified essential worker must submit a negative PCR test with their application 72 hours prior to arrival via www.staysafecnmi.com.

Unvaccinated travelers are required to quarantine in a designated government facility for seven days, and will be tested after the seven-day quarantine. Any traveler who tests positive for COVID-19 will be isolated in the designated government facility for an additional 10 days.

Travelers are considered fully vaccinated for COVID-19 if it has been:

■ 2 weeks (14 days) after their dose of an accepted single-dose, or

■ 2 weeks (14 days) after their second dose of an accepted 2-dose series

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

KEVIN

From Page 3

ensured that longtime CW families with U.S. citizen children are not separated, led a successful COVID-19 operation, and fostered an environment for young professionals to come back home and fulfill their dreams.

"The Commonwealth is well-served to have him as governor. He works tremendously hard, into many

late nights, Saturdays and Sundays, and even more so during natural disasters and throughout this pandemic. His work ethic is something that I admire, but more so something our Commonwealth can be proud of. Gov. Torres has also remained rooted to our Marianas culture and continues to serve as a role model for so many young professionals who desire to give back to these islands we call home. I will cherish our conversations, our collaborative work, and most of all our friendship." (PR)

DEATH

From Page 1

Governor's COVID-19 Task Force confirmed on Saturday the CNMI's seventh COVID-19-related death, an unvaccinated patient who passed this month.

As of Dec. 17, CHCC reported that there are 15 individuals hospitalized due to COVID-19: nine unvaccinated, six vaccinated, one on a ventilator, and three patients had been discharged.

As of Dec. 17, CHCC also reported that there have been 1,212 recoveries made, 868 active cases, and four COVID-19-related deaths since Oct. 28.

In separate news releases from Dec. 16 to 18, CHCC reported 88, 116, and 54 new positive cases.

CHCC confirmed 88 cases on Dec. 15. Of these cases, 63 were found through contact tracing and 25 through community testing. CHCC

confirmed 116 cases on Dec. 16. Of these cases, 71 were found through contact tracing, 34 through community testing, and 11 through travel testing. CHCC confirmed 54 cases on Dec. 17, all 54 being found through community testing. The vaccination statuses of the new cases were pending verification, said CHCC.

For vaccination efforts, CHCC reported a total of 797 COVID-19 vaccine shots were administered on Dec. 18, bringing the CNMI's vaccination rate to 91.3%. Registering for COVID-19 vaccines can be done at www.vaccinatecnmi.com.

For testing efforts, CHCC reported that a total of 417 COVID-19 tests were conducted on Dec. 17, comprising travel and surveillance testing but not including testing numbers from the Department of Fire & Emergency Medical Services' antigen COVID-19 testing. Registering for community-based testing can be done at <https://covidtesting.chcc.health/>.

CNMI exempted from South Korea travel quarantine

The Marianas continues to be exempted from South Korea's 10-day mandatory quarantine for all travelers entering the country, an added plus for the growing number of South Korean travelers making the island

archipelago their destination of choice.

The Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency has extended the Marianas exemption through Jan. 6, 2021, for passengers under the travel bubble agreement

between the two destinations and also based on other factors. The quarantine requirement otherwise includes citizens and foreigners entering South Korea, who have to quarantine for 10 days on arrival regardless of their vaccination status.

"We are very grateful to KDCA and the Korea Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, and Transport for granting Gov. Torres' request for the Marianas to be exempted from the 10-day quarantine,"

said Marianas Visitors Authority board chairwoman Viola Alepuyo. "This demonstrates that they are largely satisfied with the protections that the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. and CNMI COVID-19 Task Force are working to ensure for both the local community and our visitors. It is also instrumental in our continued economic recovery that has been successfully jumpstarted by the Tourism Resumption Investment Plan."

The quarantine exemption applies to fully vaccinated passengers who have purchased a Marianas travel product from travel agencies in Korea for at least two people.

The number of arriving visitors to the Marianas from South Korea is anticipated to double beginning in early January to about 1,000 visi-

tors per week. Asiana Airlines, Jeju Air, and T'way are each anticipated to increase their weekly flights from one time to two times a week in January. Instead of seven nights or more, many visitors will likely stay for only three or four nights, a travel pattern similar to arrivals before the COVID-19 pandemic. **(PR)**

Scheduled water service interruptions

There will be a scheduled water service interruption on Wednesday, Dec. 22, 2021, from 8am to 5pm, in the following areas: San Vicente, Papago (along Isa Drive), Laolao, Tutturam, Dandan Homestead, Naftan and Obyan areas.

The purpose of the water service interruption is to allow GPPC, Inc., the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.'s contractor, to install the pressure sustaining valve assembly and to connect the transmission pipe from the Papago Tank to the San Vicente Water Tank, which is near completion. Water service to the affected areas is anticipated to resume at 5pm; however, it may take additional time for water to reach the Standford and higher elevated areas in

San Vicente.

The San Vicente Water Tank Replacement Project is funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and is nearly completed. The newly constructed pre-stressed concrete tank will be commissioned after disinfection is completed and passes bacteriological testing, appropriate chlorine residual and all other required testing procedures. Once completed, this tank will provide a more resilient system and reliable water services to the areas it will serve.

For more information, contact the CUC Hotline (236-4333) or monitor our Facebook page for the latest updates (<https://www.facebook.com/CommonwealthUtilitiesCorporation/>). **(PR)**



WINNING ARTWORK

Artwork by Pacifica Insurance Underwriters, Inc.'s 8th Annual Pacifica Art Contest category 1 winner Minjoon Jeon from Mount Carmel School. This year's theme: "Stay Covid-19 free". For Contest information, log on to www.pacificains.com/artcontest and follow Pacifica's Facebook and Instagram accounts. Artworks are on display at their office in Susupe for public viewing. **CONTRIBUTED PHOTO**

NMC campuses closed Dec. 20 to Jan. 3

Northern Marianas College campuses on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota will be closed from Dec. 20, 2021 to Jan. 2, 2022. Offices will reopen on Monday, Jan. 3, 2022.

Registration for spring 2022 semester

As announced, ongoing NMC students who have earned 13 or more credits can continue to register for classes without academic advising by accessing their ProaPortal accounts. Registration for classes through Pro-

aPortal will continue through Jan. 3, 2022. Students will be able to make changes to their schedule during "add and drop" week on Jan. 18 - 24, 2022, but course selection may be limited during this period.

More information about NMC's spring semester can be found on www.marianas.edu.

For urgent matters, community members are asked to email nmc@marianas.edu. For campus emergencies, contact the NMC security at 237-6800. **(PR)**

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Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

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JVA No. 22 - 035

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Closing Date: December 30, 2021

<p>POSITION TITLE:</p> <p>DEPARTMENT:</p> <p>LOCATION:</p> <p>ANNUAL SALARY:</p> <p>CONTRACT:</p> <p>POSITION(S):</p>	<p>Trades Technician: Mechanic</p> <p>Power Generation Division</p> <p>Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, USA</p> <p>\$22,193.60 to \$28,115.00 per annum, Non-Exempt</p> <p>Not Contracted</p> <p>One (1)</p>
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The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Power Generation Manager or his/her designee. This class specification represents only the core areas of responsibilities; specific position assignments will vary depending on the needs of the Power Generation Division.

Duties:

- Performs maintenance, operations, installations and/or repairs in assigned area of responsibility;
- Provides technical guidance regarding assigned functions; and ensures quality service levels in accordance with proper procedures;
- Provide assistance in monitoring and complying with regulatory compliance; operates specialized and heavy equipment; performs maintenance activities and skilled repairs to equipment, infrastructure and/or other items of assigned area of responsibility; identifies issues and operational concerns;
- Performs analysis, maintenance, operations, installations and/or repairs of 8 megawatt, 13 megawatt Mitsubishi-MAN diesel engines to include engine auxiliary equipment in the main Power Plant and provide the same services on the small Power Plant with 2.5 megawatt Electromotive Division (EMD) units.
- Ensures work is within Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) engineering specifications and quality levels.
- Performs inspections; provides troubleshooting; evaluates corrective measures or options; recommends and implements solutions and corrective actions;
- Receives trouble calls; responds to requests and provides information or status updates. Initiates requests for the replenishment of materials and supplies; cleans, organizes and maintains work and supply areas;
- Analyzes readings of equipment; maintains records, logs, orders, data, and prepares reports;
- Perform reconditioning of used parts;
- Perform alignment of pumps and motors at auxiliary sites; Bending, cutting, grinding and fabricating various types of materials;
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned

Minimum Requirements:

Education: High School Diploma, General Education Diploma, or Adult Basic Education. Graduate from a Vocational/Technical Institution as a Mechanic or related field. Must demonstrate having had (A) 4 years of increasingly responsible experience performing mechanic duties on 1500 HP or larger diesel prime mover engines and associated auxiliary units. Experience on Mitsubishi MAN, EMD, Cummins and/or Nordberg diesel engines desired but not required.

Knowledge of: Mechanical principles, practices and procedures of assigned service area; Mathematical concepts; Inspection procedures; Safety procedures and safe work practices;

Skills in: Performing skilled maintenance, operations and repair work of various plant systems; Operating specialized and heavy equipment; Monitoring equipment and making adjustments; Performing inspections and identifying issues; Troubleshooting issues and recommending or implementing solutions; Receiving requests and trouble calls and providing assistance; Initiating supply requests; Taking equipment readings and maintaining historical data; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction. Work closely with others and/or alone depending on assigned daily activities.

Physical Demands:

- Able to lift and carry heavy objects of 45 pounds and over, climb ladders, reach above the shoulders, stand, sit, crawl and kneel for prolonged periods and perform repeated bending.
- Recognize color codes, operate cranes and motor vehicles.
- Work primarily inside around machinery in operation; in varying degree of temperature in tight or cramped (confined) work spaces, at heights, on ladders or scaffolds, and on slippery or uneven walking surfaces in close proximity to high and low voltage circuits and climbs stairs frequently.
- Occasionally use solvents, de-greasing agents, or other chemical agents, and be assigned to protracted or irregular hours of

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday and Friday 7:30 am - 4:30 pm (Except Legal Holidays). Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org

P. O. Box 501220, Third Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 664-4282 • Fax: (670) 235-5131
CUC is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.



NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp | Website: <http://www.nmhc.gov.mp>

PUBLIC NOTICE

DECEMBER 10, 2021

(This Notice is paid by NMHC with HUD Funds.)

Tels: (670) 234-6866
234-9447
234-7689
234-7670
Fax: (670) 234-9021



Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lt Governor Arnold I. Palacios, and the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) Board of Directors, through its Chairwoman, Ms. Marcie M. Tomokane, wish to announce that its Consolidated Annual Performance Report (CAPER) for Program Year 2020 is available for review. Comments made by the general public should be submitted no later than 4:30 p.m. on December 27, 2021. Written comments must be submitted to the NMHC Office in Garapan, Saipan, P. O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950, or by contacting Ms. Zenie P. Mafnas, Deputy Corporate Director, at 234-9447/7689 or by email at deputydirector@nmhcgov.net.

The report will be submitted to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Honolulu Office, by December 31, 2021. The CAPER encompasses the performance assessment of all HUD-funded programs, administered by the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation, in the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands.

The report may be viewed at our website at www.nmhcgov.net and NMHC Facebook page. When the government reopens, the report will be available at NMHC Central Office in Saipan and at the respective NMHC Field Offices in Rota and Tinian during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays. Individuals needing special accommodations to review and comment on the plan must contact the Planning Division for arrangements by calling (670) 234-7689/6866 during regular business hours.

/s/
Marcie M. Tomokane
Chairwoman of the Board

Tinian Field Office
Tel: (670) 433-9213
Fax: (670) 433-3690

"NMHC is an equal employment and fair housing public agency"

Rota Field Office
Tel: (670) 532-9410
Fax: (670) 532-9441

241 graduates earn degrees from UOG

The University of Guam conferred degrees yesterday to 241 graduates at its Fannuchanan Commencement Ceremony. Among the degree recipients were the first-ever civil engineering graduates to have been educated on island.

"I can feel the enthusiasm for this on-campus commencement, and I'd like to say a special thanks to all the people who have made this event possible," said UOG president Thomas W. Krise in his remarks. "[...] I thank our graduates for learning with us, for challenging us to think in new and different ways, and for your commitment to making the world a better place for all of us and for those who come after us."

The ceremony—the first held at the Calvo Field House since December 2019 due to the COVID-19 pandemic—took place in three separate ceremonies to allow for social distancing.

The first ceremony awarded 30 degrees under the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, 27 degrees under the College of Natural and Applied Sciences, and 12 degrees under the School of Engineering. The second ceremony awarded 65 degrees under the School of Education and 12 degrees under the School of Health. And the third ceremony awarded 95 degrees under



Three socially distanced commencement ceremonies took place at the University of Guam's Calvo Field House on Dec. 19 with a total of 241 graduates crossing the stage to accept their diplomas.

the School of Business and Public Administration.

Of the 176 bachelor's degrees conferred, the highest numbers were in business administration with 43 degrees and criminal justice with 17 degrees.

Of the 65 master's degrees conferred, more than half were under the School of Education, primarily Master of Education degrees specializing in reading, Master of Arts in Counseling degrees, and Master of Arts in Teaching, while one-quarter were Master of Public Administration graduates.

Commencement speaker: 'I did not inherit wealth,

land, or business'

Delivering the commencement address by video from California was Diosdado P. "Dado" Banatao, an engineer as well as a self-made entrepreneur and venture capitalist who has come to be known as a visionary within Silicon Valley, the global center for high-tech innovations.

Banatao has ties to Guam through his father, Salvador, who worked overseas in Guam from the Philippines when Banatao was a child.

Banatao is credited with developing several semiconductor technologies, including the first graphics accelerator chip and the local bus concept that

continue to be foundation technologies in every personal computer today.

"My innovations for the PC made personal computers smaller, more powerful, and less expensive. [...] My goal, always—to make people's lives better [...]" he said.

He shared his life story—from being the son of a rice farmer and a homemaker in the Philippines, where he walked barefoot to school, to earning his bachelor's in electric engineering from the Mapúa Institute of Technology in the Philippines, earning his master's in electrical engineering and computer science from Stanford University, working for

Boeing and several innovative technology corporations, and ultimately founding three of his own technology startups and launching a multimillion-dollar venture capital firm.

"My journey from Cagayan Valley to Silicon Valley is arguably remarkable because I did not inherit wealth, land, or business. I achieved my success through the use of my own intellectual capacity and through strong values of hard work, perseverance instilled by my parents, who live by the soil," he said. "I can also firmly say that my accomplishments truly had a positive impact on global industries and economies."

'Do not be blinded by the darkness'

The graduates also heard from class valedictorian Anthony V. Reyes, who earned a bachelor's in civil engineering and is the university's first-ever valedictorian from the School of Engineering.

He shared how school was challenging for him, trying to fit into the standard mold for learning and later finding out he had a learning disability. He credits his progress to great teachers who didn't see it as a disability.

"These teachers saw me not as a student with a learning disability but as a student with different learning abilities," he said. "[...] I was a student like everyone but now filled with aspirations, hopes, and dreams."

Reyes went on to be in the top 10 of his graduating class from Southern High School and to be the Most Distinguished Graduate in his class at Guam Community College, where he earned associate degrees in both pre-architectural drawing and civil engineering technology. He is also a first-generation college graduate in his family.

He closed by encouraging his classmates to not be afraid of the unknown.

"As individuals we have the propensity to make decisions based on things that we are familiar with and comfortable for us, thus sometimes closing doors of unexplored opportunities for fear of the unknown," he said. "Do not be blinded by the darkness." (PR)

United 'flies' Santa from North Pole to Guam

GUAM—United Airlines flight 1225 direct service from the North Pole to Guam touched down on Dec. 15, 2021, at 4pm local time, bringing Santa on a special Christmas stop to deliver cheer and toys to children from three Guam homeless shelters—Safe Haven, Guma San Jose, and Liheng Sinafo.

Thirty-two children, ranging in age from 3 to 13 years old, were invited along with their parents or guardians to the United Hangar by United employee volunteers. They were welcomed on-site by the angelic children's voices of the Santa Barbara School Children's Choir.

Sam Shinohara, United's managing director of Airport Operations for Asia-Pacific said, "This is the sixth Fantasy Flight event hosted in Guam, and the Guam hub is one of nine stations in the entire United network that was able to host our beloved event in 2021. Our employees felt that this year, more than ever, it was important to extend the

spirit of giving to children who deserve it the most. We are grateful to have worked with Catholic Social Service to make this happen and support our local homeless shelters. We hope our community can join us and continue to remember them this holiday season and beyond."

"This can be a challenging time of the year for Guam's homeless population, and we are so moved by the United team's outpour of cheer and love for the children," said Paula Perez Siguenza, deputy director of Catholic Social Service. "We appreciate the outreach from our community every day of the year, but the generosity bestowed upon those who are most in need during the holidays is felt even deeper. *Si yu'os ma'ase' United!*"

In addition to tours of Santa's Boeing 737 and meeting the United flight crew who flew Santa to Guam, the children were treated to live entertainment, a magic show, and lively activity stations filled with art, crafts, snacks, and games.

"Santa Clause usually charts a flight for the children to visit the North Pole each year, but this year was extra special. Santa decided to escape the cold and make his way to Guam to surprise very deserving girls and boys," said Justin Marion, United general manager and chairperson of the Fantasy Flight 2021 committee. "Our employee volunteers were instrumental in making Fantasy Flight happen this year. They reimagined the experience to keep everyone safe while still making the event exciting for the children."

Santa and his elves completed the evening by distributing gifts to each child. The gifts magically emerged from the belly of the Boeing 737-800 and Santa called each child's name.

"We wanted the children to receive gifts they wished for, and we thank Catholic Social Service for working with us to gather the children's wish lists," said Marion.

As the children departed the United Hangar, they were treated to a special meal and a Fantasy Flight drawstring backpack filled with United's Ben Flyin' bear, a United pop fidget toy, and treats.

Shinohara added, "It's diffi-



Santa Claus gives toy bicycle to one of the children from three Guam homeless shelters who were invited to the United Fantasy Flight at the United Hangar in Guam.

UNITED AIRLINES

cult to express what this event means to the United family. The children's smiles and happiness reminded us of the true spirit of the holidays. We thank everyone who played a role in making Fantasy Flight 2021 a reality and so special for the children. Happy Holidays to our friends, family, and customers throughout Guam and Micronesia."

A 31-year tradition

Thirty-one years ago, United Airlines hosted its first Fantasy Flight at major hubs around the globe, with exception

of 2019 and 2020 when the world battled the COVID-19 pandemic. Guam's Hometown Airline celebrated its sixth event and is one of nine hubs in the world to offer the exclusive Fantasy Flight event in 2021. Fantasy Flight is completely volunteer-driven. United employees and volunteers from throughout the Guam station worked cheerfully to organize the event, raise money for gifts, solicit donations, buy and wrap gifts, and design a new holiday experience for the children.

United Airlines Employees Association of Guam thanks its Fantasy Flight community of volunteers and sponsors whose support has made the event memorable for the children: Andrea Ocampo, BIBA Magic, Fastenal, Freeze Frame Guam, Guam Dry Cleaners, Guam International Airport Authority, Kyle Mandapat, LSG, McDonald's of Guam, Options PC, Pepsi Guam Bottling, Premise Health, Santa Barbara School Children's Choir, Steel Athletics, and SKIP Entertainment. (PR)

Two Saipan sons become lieutenants in US Army

In conjunction with their graduation from the University of Guam yesterday, two cadets from the University of Guam's ROTC program commissioned Saturday as second lieutenants in the U.S. Army. The private ceremony took place at the Plaza de Espana in Hagåtña.

The commissioning ceremony is the culmination of the ROTC program that the cadets undertook while studying at the University of Guam.

The two cadets who earned their commission as U.S. Army second lieutenants are:

Emmanuel Ron Yap Bulaklak

- Signal Corps Officer, Massachusetts Army National Guard

- Bachelor of Science in Biology

- Graduate of Marianas High School, Saipan



University of Guam ROTC cadet Emmanuel Bulaklak is commissioned as an officer through the UOG ROTC program during a private family ceremony on Dec. 18 at the Plaza de Espana in Hagåtña. UNIVERSITY OF GUAM

Justin Ralph Gannaban Cayading

- Medical Service Corps Officer, Active Duty, Branch Detailed for Infantry Service

- Bachelor of Science in Health Science, Concentration in Pre-Physical Therapy

- 2014 graduate of Marianas High School, Saipan

The cadets developed their leadership skills in the ROTC classroom and field training environments, and the hallmark of the ROTC curriculum is the real-world application of the leadership instruction. The cadets also participated in military training courses in the continental United States to enhance their abilities to lead people in challenging environments.

"Emmanuel and Justin are emblematic of the incredibly well-rounded leaders we have in our program, and they will



make great officers," said Lt. Col. Thomas Anderson, the professor of military science

at the University of Guam. "Their problem-solving skills, honed in the rigorous STEM

University of Guam ROTC cadet Justin Cayading, center, is commissioned as an officer through the UOG ROTC program during a private family ceremony on Dec. 18 at the Plaza de Espana in Hagåtña. He is joined here by Lt. Col. Thomas Anderson, left, professor of military science, UOG; and Master Sgt. Rocky Duran, senior military science instructor, UOG.

UNIVERSITY OF GUAM

environments of the bio-med and health sciences programs at UOG, will give them a significant advantage over their officer peers, and I have no doubt that they will make lasting impacts as sons of the Mariana Islands."

The University of Guam ROTC program was established in October 1979 and is celebrating more than 40 years of producing dynamic leaders for the Mariana Islands, Micronesia, and the United States. (PR)



Coral Ocean Resort's Olé restaurant, Saipan's only wellness and fine dining restaurant, will be back starting this Friday, Dec. 24, with brand new concept. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A SURPRISE GIFT FOR THE CNMI

Coral Ocean Resort's Olé restaurant to open on Christmas eve

Coral Ocean Resort's Olé restaurant, Saipan's only wellness and fine dining restaurant, will be back starting this Friday, Dec. 24, with brand new concept.

Celebrate your Christmas at restaurant Olé! With food prepared by an enthusiastic team, Olé restaurant will be opening for the first time to celebrate the holiday season with fine sushi and seafood brunch buffet, exclusive steak house dinner, and Sunday brunch! Exclusive local discount will be offered during this opening weekend.

With the newly renovated ocean-view dining environment, we aim to maximize your dining experience and have a feast at Coral Ocean Resort with your family.

On Christmas Eve, an exotic "Sushi & Seafood" buffet will be served with unlimited beverage from 11:30am until 2pm, featuring a signature COR roll, Special Green Tea Tempura roll, and more, paired with unlimited champagne and mimosa.


Olé restaurant will also prepare something special for steak lovers on Christmas

Eve: Signature Ghee Butter Steak, Porterhouse Steak, and delicious side dishes, and for most, premium beverages. The steak dinner will be operating exclusively on Dec. 24, from 6pm to 10pm.

To wrap up the holiday weekend, you and your family can enjoy Sunday brunch. With special local discount exclusively for Dec. 26, Olé restaurant presents you orange gazpacho, lechon, and unlimited beverage, including Mimosa and champagne. Sunday brunch is from 11:30am until 2pm.

To ensure the safety of guests, we have been and will continue to be strictly adhering to the guideline of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., thoroughly practicing preventive measures at all levels of hotel operation. Coral Ocean Resort has obtained Safe Travel Stamp, certified by World Travel and Tourism Committee and Marianas Visitors Authority.

For reservation and inquiries, call (670) 234-7000 (7am to 1pm). (PR)



CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
Tel: (670) 664-2371 | Fax: (670) 664-2408 | Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP22-GOV-4220026

MONITORING SERVICES FOR THE POST CLOSURE
OF THE PUERTO RICO DUMPSITE IN GARAPAN, SAIPAN
SUBMISSION DATE: 9:30 AM JANUARY 06, 2022

Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lt. Governor Arnold I. Palacios, through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) are soliciting sealed proposals from qualified contractors to provide Labor, Material and Equipment for the MONITORING SERVICES of the Post Closure Maintenance of the Puerto Rico Dumpsite (Now called Governor Eloy S. Inos Peace Park) in Puerto Rico, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). This project will be funded by the 702 Covenant funding under the U.S. Department of Interior, Office of Insular Affairs.

The project package will be available in digital format only on **December 06, 2021** at the Capital Improvement Program Office, Office of the Governor, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building in Capitol Hill, Saipan, during regular working hours.

A mandatory Pre-Proposal Conference will be held at the Capital Improvement Program Office, Office of the Governor, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building in Capitol Hill, Saipan, at **10:00 AM ChST December 21, 2021**. Proposers may request to participate via phone call or virtually five (5) days prior to the meeting scheduled. All attendees are required to use a face mask and exercise social distancing throughout the duration of the meeting.

Questions regarding this RFP may be submitted via email to Ms. Jessel Mesa at jm.mesa@dof.gov.mp no later than **4:30 PM ChST, December 27th, 2021**. All Questions & Answers will be shared with all prospective Proposers.


Proposers located outside of the CNMI must fill out and submit the Notice of Intent to Propose Form to the Director of Procurement Services no later than **9:30AM January 17th, 2022**.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS, AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSALS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/s/ Ralph DLG. Torres
Governor, CNMI

/s/ Francisco C. Aguon, Acting Director
CNMI Procurement & Supply



Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Office of Procurement
Guma' Hustisia, Imwal Aweewe, House of Justice
P.O. Box 502165, Saipan, MP 96950
Phone: (670) 236-9791 | Email: procurement@nmjjudiciary.com

INVITATION FOR BIDS
NO. ITB-2022-JUD-2

SUBMISSION DATE: JANUARY 20, 2022 (ChST)
SUBMIT VIA: THE CNMI GOVERNMENT'S VENDOR SELF SERVICE PORTAL
TIME: 10:00 A.M.

DECEMBER 20, 2021

"VEHICLE PURCHASE
FOR MARSHALS SERVICE DIVISION"

The Commonwealth Judicial Branch ("Judiciary") is accepting bids for the purchase and delivery of one (1) Police package SUV (white) from certified car dealers for the Marshals Service Division.

This project is supported, in whole or in part, by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, CNMI award number CNMI22004, awarded to the CNMI Judiciary by the CNMI Department of Finance.


A copy of the Invitation for Bids Package ("Package") is available on the CNMI Government's new Vendor portal, Vendor Self Service ("VSS"), at <https://selfservice.dof.gov.mp/vss/default.aspx>. You must register on the VSS to participate in this ITB. For registration instructions, please follow the link: <https://www.finance.gov.mp/division-forms/oit/cnmi-vss-registration-instructions.pdf>.

The Judiciary reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, or portions thereof, and waive immaterial defects if to do so would be in the best interest of the CNMI government.


The provisions of the NMI Judiciary Rules of Procurement Rule 69 prohibiting gratuities, kickbacks and contingent fees shall apply.

/s/ ALEXANDRO C. CASTRO
CHIEF JUSTICE

/s/ FERMIN B. DELA CRUZ
PROCUREMENT OFFICER



Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONS LICENSING BOARD
P.O. Box 502078, Bldg., 1242 Pohnpei Court
Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel No: (670) 664-4809 Fax: (670) 664-4814
Email: cnmibpl-hcplb.net
Website: cnmibpl-hcplb.net



Pursuant to P.L. 8-41, Section 11, Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lt. Governor Arnold I. Palacios, through the Health Care Professions Licensing Board (HCPLB) are hereby giving notice that it will hold its regular monthly board meeting on **Wednesday, December 22, 2021, at 8am** on Saipan. The meeting will be held at the Administration Building, Governor's Conference Room on Capitol Hill.

AGENDA

- I. Meeting Call to Order
- II. Determination of Quorum
- III. Review and Adoption of Agenda
- IV. Review and Adoption of Minutes (11/17/2021)
- V. Public Comments
- VI. Chairperson's Report
 - A. Letter from Board Member Dr. Warren Creed
- VII. Director's Report
 - A. Consumer Complaint – Ms. Christina K. I
 - B. American Association of State Counseling board (AASCB)
 - C. 2022 Upcoming National Councils Meeting
- VIII. Investigator's Report
- IX. Communications from the Governor's Office & Legislature
 - A. Governor's Office - MEMO: Closure of non-essential government offices
 - B. Legislature
- X. Old Business
 - A. Proposed Amendments for Addiction Professional Regulations
 - B. Proposed Amendments for Psychology Regulations
- XI. New Business
- XII. Pending Applications for Board's Review
 - A. New Application
 - B. Renewal Applications
- XIII. Miscellaneous Business
- XIV. Executive Session: The Board may vote to meet in executive session to consult with Counsel on pending or anticipated legal matters.
 - Peter Geissler – Radiology Technology Applicant (Letter Update)
- XV. Announcements
 - A. Next Meeting Date
 - B. Adjournment of Meeting

Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Vaccination rates are up, but holdouts ensure the virus will stick around

As of last week, more than 200 million Americans had been fully vaccinated against the coronavirus, constituting around 60% of the population. It's an important milestone, but so is the milestone of the nation's 800,000th coronavirus death this week. With a new variant on the rise and a sizable minority of the country still holding out against the vaccines, infection rates continue to rise. What the U.S. is seeing now is what doctors are calling "an epidemic of the unvaccinated." And it's creating what psychologists call "pandemic fatigue" throughout society.

As the crisis drags on, it's important to remember that it is almost entirely those holdouts who are driving infection and death rates today. It's been said repeatedly, but it can't be said enough: They are risking their lives and prolonging the pandemic.

According to The Washington Post, an average of more than 1.9 million vaccine doses per day were administered last week, an increase over the previous week by about 35%. That's good news, but it doesn't change the fact that coronavirus deaths are up as well. That doesn't mean the vaccines aren't working—they absolutely do work; there's no ambiguity about that in the data. What it means is that, without the vaccines, the death rates would be soaring far higher.

The data is also clear about who is dying: The dead consist almost entirely of those who refused vaccination. No vaccine is perfect, and vaccinated people can still catch the virus, but their cases tend to be less severe and far less likely to land them in the hospital or the morgue. A recent study in Texas found that unvaccinated people of all ages in that state are 40 times more likely than vaccinated people to die from the disease. How such a sizable number of Americans can look at these facts and still refuse vaccination is a mystery that psychologists and historians will ponder in years to come.

The weird intersection of public health and politics throughout the pandemic has prolonged the crisis to the point that society is starting to suffer pandemic fatigue. With year three of the pandemic approaching, and the omicron variant now spreading through much of the country, the danger is real that even more exasperated Americans are going to give up on precautions like vaccination and masks.

To those who feel that impulse, we would point out that this crisis could be all but over by now if not for the vaccination holdouts. They are the ones giving the virus new opportunities to spread, making it necessary for the rest of society to continue the precautions. They are the reason this isn't over yet. Frustration over this seemingly never-ending pandemic is understandable—but that's where it should be focused.

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It's time to take UFOs seriously

By DILLON GUTHRIE
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Of all the year's political drama, the most surprising may be the U.S. government's actions on unidentified aerial phenomena, or UAPs—better known as UFOs.

The opening act came in June, when the Pentagon and the director of national intelligence delivered an astonishing report to Congress addressing UAPs. Most of these phenomena turn out to have prosaic explanations—such as weather balloons, space debris and atmospheric effects in the sky—with a small percentage exhibiting unusual flight characteristics that suggest advanced technology.

The June report, however, found the opposite: It could account for only one of the 144 UAP sightings between 2004 and 2021 that it examined, including 80 observed with multiple sensors such as high-tech military radar and infrared cameras mounted on warplanes.

Take one of the most memorable sightings, caught on infrared camera in 2004. Navy pilots flying from the USS Nimitz spotted a 40-foot white object resembling a Tic Tac mint levitating erratically above the waters off the California coast. As the pilots approached, the Tic Tac—despite lacking wings or any sign of propulsion—rose to meet them midair before speeding instantly away, vanishing. The report did not conclude what the Tic Tac or any other UAPs are, and it could not attribute them to secret technology developed by the U.S. or any adversaries.

Now Congress wants answers. In November, Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., authored legislation creating an office to study UAPs governmentwide and report to Congress. Then the Defense Department tried to stake its claim to the issue, shortly after announcing the formation of its own UAP unit. Its team would investigate only UAPs spotted in sensitive military airspace, and it would operate without congressional supervision. Some criticized the half-measure as a preemptive ploy to avert oversight, though the Pentagon denies those claims.

But Gillibrand and a bipartisan bloc of lawmakers, including Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., and Rep. Ruben Gallego, D-Ariz., were not deterred. They steered legislation through Congress—attached as an amendment to the annual defense bill, sent to President Joe Biden's desk Wednesday to be signed into law—that establishes a new office to study UAPs. The amendment also requires unclassified reports on UAPs delivered to Congress each year, as well as semiannual classified briefings to legislators.

The move represents the most significant public progress yet to understand UAPs. For all its dysfunction, only Congress has

the institutional power and legitimacy to lead this conversation.

UAPs intersect with topics as wide-ranging as aerospace technology, national security and potential health effects on individuals exposed to these craft. No single agency has the multidisciplinary know-how or legal authority to tackle all these questions. For example, the Pentagon unit's intended focus on military airspace would ignore the Federal Aviation Administration and civilian flight safety.

A comprehensive strategy from Congress is needed. The office created by the Gillibrand amendment accordingly will take a broad approach by investigating UAPs across jurisdictional lines, prioritizing areas of scientific study and requiring various agencies to collaborate—not only the Defense Department and the Federal Aviation Administration but also the Energy Department, intelligence community, NASA and others. It will develop a science plan to investigate striking physical characteristics of UAPs (like their speed) and potentially replicate any advanced UAP technologies. And the new office will seek to understand the global nature of these phenomena, directing outreach to foreign allies.

In particular, the office will analyze whether UAPs represent foreign adversarial technology or otherwise pose a threat. That should be its top priority. The June report stated that UAPs, in addition to representing a flight safety hazard, "may pose a challenge to U.S. national security." Given the regular sightings in military airspace—and the apparent connection between UAPs and nuclear technology—national security concerns are paramount.

In setting up this office, Congress has legitimized the long-ridiculed topic of UAPs. Yet its work does not end there. It must ensure that the office receives adequate funding and make clear that the office should be led by a civilian director with the expertise necessary to tackle these issues and cut through the Pentagon's red tape.

Of course, the perspectives of defense and intelligence officials will be crucial. But the Pentagon has a long history of obfuscating work relating to UAPs, whereas Congress can promote transparency. Once the office has delivered its first unclassified report, Congress should hold public hearings to discuss its findings.

Now that legislators have marshaled action on UAPs, they need to make sure the new office does not become shrouded in secrecy.

Dillon Guthrie is an attorney and served as a counsel at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, an advisor on the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and a legislative aide to then-Sen. John Kerry.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Freshwater contamination in Hawaii and the Marianas

Red Hill and Navy ineptitude in Hawaii

The U.S. Navy has maintained and operated a fuel supply and distribution system that has been in place for decades on the Hawaiian Island of Oahu. Military residents living in Oahu became alarmed last month after experiencing their drinking and tap water smelling like jet fuel. This most recent episode of freshwater contamination is one of several that have taken place over the years, tied to jet fuel leaks from the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage facility operated by the U.S. Navy in Oahu.

Media reports claim that the levels of petroleum hydrocarbons diesel range organics have exceeded 350 times the acceptable benchmark levels for human health, safety, and exposures as outlined by Hawaii state officials. Gasoline range organics are reportedly close to 70 times above acceptable levels.

Hawaii state officials responded by shutting down one of the major freshwater wells out of fear that one freshwater shaft may have been poisoned.

Red Hill, what it is

Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility is a high-altitude World War II-era pipeline infrastructure system that holds and distributes jet fuel from 20 tanks having a total capacity of up to 250 million gallons. Over 1 million gallons of fuel from this facility have leaked over the past several years.

Over 90,000 residents have been directly impacted and several thousand have been relocated because of this jet fuel leak. The Navy is also impacted because over 60% of the water wells providing up to 22 million gallons of fresh water for Navy needs daily have been shut down.

All branches of the U.S. armed forces and Hawaii state government organizations rely on Red Hill for their jet fuel storage and transmission needs.

Historical snapshot

Red Hill has been a longstanding cause of concern because this

site sits about 100 feet above a groundwater aquifer that supplies over 70% of Oahu's total drinking water source.

The Hawaii Department of Health recommended over a decade ago that the Navy put in place a leak detection system and groundwater monitoring well system to protect the drinking water.

In this current crisis, Hawaii state officials, including the governor and state lawmakers, have ordered the Navy to defuel and remove all storage tanks that make up Red Hill and install water treatment systems. The Navy has yet to comply with state orders and is working with state officials to continue operating Red Hill.

The Navy thinks Red Hill should remain operational up through 2045.

Why the Chamorros of the Marianas need to pay very close attention to freshwater risks seen in Hawaii

We need to pay very close attention to Red Hill because what has been happening in Hawaii has happened in Guam (military-related freshwater contamination) and can happen again.

We need to know the full and complete extent of past contamination done to our sole freshwater aquifer system by the Air Force. We need to know the full and complete extent of past contamination of our freshwater resources by the Navy.

We need to know the full extent of environmental work completed to clean up, if at all, closed water wells in Guam. We need to demand that the Pentagon explain in complete detail all its plans to protect Guam's water lens. We need to ask what efforts have been or are being made to fully retrofit all portions of fuel storage systems on island that serve the Pentagon. We need to know why Navy fuel system leaks were promptly repaired in North America but remain unresolved in Hawaii, knowing that the leaks in North America were not located directly above underground freshwater systems.

We need to know why the Guam and CNMI congressmen are not holding public hearings and meetings to see what can be

RICK'S COLUMN

By RICK PEREZ

Special to the Saipan Tribune



Rick Perez used to serve in the U.S. military and has work experiences in public policy research and public affairs. He is passionate about national security and geopolitics and runs a newsletter called Guam Affairs at guamaffairs.substack.com. For questions or comments, contact Perez at rickp7839@gmail.com.

learned from the Red Hill debacle. We need to know why Guam and CNMI officials have not vigorously pursued recent efforts to learn about jet fuel leaks and human health risks associated with groundwater contamination that have been and are taking place in Hawaii.

We need to know the nature, number, and age of all monitoring wells Guam and the CNMI currently have. We need to know what the percentage-based probabilities of specific levels of jet fuel leakage are currently being referenced in Guam and the NMI.

We need to know what the Guam and CNMI governor's plan to do to prevent anything like Red Hill from happening in the Marianas. We need to know what the CNMI and Guam legislatures plan to do to prevent a Red Hill-like scenario from taking place in the Marianas. We need to know what specific appropriation language the Guam and CNMI congressmen plan to introduce to prevent a Red Hill-type situation from taking place.

Any notion that the Pentagon can have an exemption on freshwater contamination practices into perpetuity is folly. Chamorros of the Marianas have a major incentive to pay very close attention to how the Navy behaves in Hawaii when it comes to freshwater contamination.

Media inconsistent in telling the stories of gun violence victims

By GREG JACKSON

THE BALTIMORE SUN

In the wake of a global conversation on race, equity and inclusion, the media's portrayal of gun violence victims remains inconsistent and perpetuates stereotypes.

When incidents of gun violence occur in predominantly white, suburban communities, the story centers on the lives lost and impacted. Pictures show victims with friends and family. As these images float across your screen, you may hear how the community "was rocked" by the incident, how a "beloved coach and father of two" was gunned down. The victim is given humanity.

Compare this to an urban community; the story and narration may be presented differently. On screen: crime scene tape, flashing lights, neighbors consoling each other. We see these visuals while hearing, "John Doe, 30, was the latest victim in a string of recent shootings in this inner-city neighborhood." No back story or humanization, instead John Doe's death was unfortunate, but not surprising.

In majority-minority communities, Black and brown gun violence victims are seen as statistics. Their deaths or injuries are reported without emotion. In more affluent suburban communities, victims are described with care and dignity. Stories highlight their achievements and the impact they had on those who loved them.

Recently, in Baltimore 16 people were shot over one weekend. Few, if any, local television media outlets mentioned a single victim by name. Instead, images of red and blue lights dancing off yellow crime police tape dotted the screen. Compare this to the coverage of the recent mass shooting at Oxford High School in Michigan. Extensive coverage has been given to telling the stories of the students killed, the vigils held and how the community is coping.

While coverage of this violence can discriminate, gun violence does not. It takes lives or leaves long-lasting physical and emotional scars for those impacted. We are at a critical time within the gun violence prevention movement. For the first time, the federal government plans to invest \$5 billion to treat gun violence like a public health crisis, providing resources for a holistic approach to gun violence prevention, moving away from solutions rooted in crime prevention. More and more, communities are adopting policies that put people at the center of the solution. Yet, our work is more difficult when the images and words used to describe victims and the communities where they live and work advance the status quo and discount their humanity.

This is a public health crisis, and our response in all parts of our culture must reflect this importance. In the Black community, more than 85% of homicide victims are shot and killed with guns. Nationally, more than 38,000 people are killed by guns each year, and nearly another 85,000 are injured.

COVID-19 has taken 800,000 American lives, and at the beginning of this pandemic, when the death toll was much lower, each death was discussed with care, reported and chronicled with a richness that brought strangers to life and gave voice to those often forgotten in nursing homes. The national mood was somber, collaborative and change-driven, largely colored by national and local reporting.

This is how we should discuss gun violence, its victims and their stories. Focusing on the people impacted by the bullet and those impacted by the residual echo of the shots fired that live on well beyond those fateful seconds. By doing so, we can curb gun violence with creative policies and storytelling that doesn't criminalize victims. We will no longer be working to solve a problem for them, we will be working to solve a problem for us.

We must be committed to ending gun violence in all forms with sustained advocacy and community investments that will make a lasting impact. This work naturally extends to lawmakers and policy experts to reshape gun violence prevention policies, as well as storytellers and journalists, who must recast how we contextualize and chronicle the lives of those impacted by gun violence. Together, we will author a narrative of innovative policymaking and storytelling that works to reduce gun violence and boldly break the mold of upholding the status quo.

Greg Jackson (Twitter: @gregoryjackson) is executive director of the Community Justice Action Fund.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Fond memories

I was reading your newspaper article about the change in the name of the hotel from Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan to Crown Plaza Resort-Saipan. According to the news article, Crown Plaza Resort is scheduled to commence operation in March 2022. In reading the article covering the article on Dec. 15, it brings back many fond memories of the hotel in prior years.

The first hotel ever built in that location was Saipan Beach Inter-Continental Inn, a 200-room, three-storey hotel that was built by Pacific Micronesia Corp. PMC was primarily owned by the

subsidiary of PAMAM (IHC). Others owning a small shares included Japan Travel Bureau, Inc. and Keio Plaza Hotel, both from Japan. SBII, which had 200 rooms, was contracted to Black Construction in 1974 and began operating in July 1976. There were several locals that owned 10% shares in SBII. I was one of them.

As tourism business began to blossom on Saipan, a decision was made to build a 246-room, nine-storey hotel on the same property. Eventually Dai-Ichi Hotel acquired the property and operated until they decided to offer the super structure to a new lessee. A division of TanHoldings Corp. is presently the lessee of the property and is now taking the initiative to appoint the

operation of the hotel to Crown Plaza Resort. I understand that CPR is owned by Intercontinental Hotels Group and will be the operating company of the hotel. TanHoldings, as I understand it, is still the lessee of the property and will own the improvement that is now known as Crown Plaza Resort.

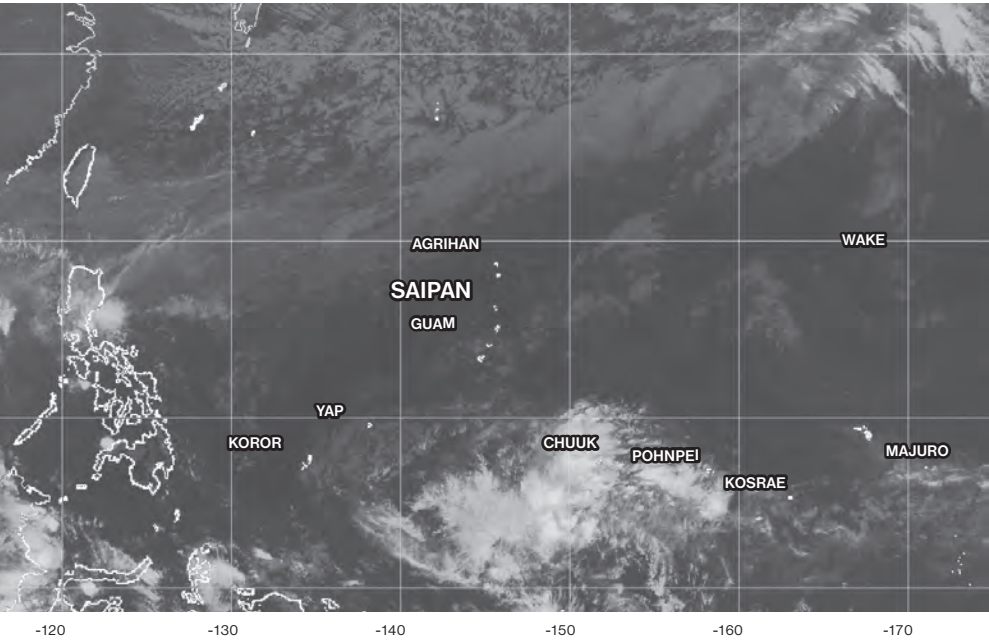
I hope that the information herein are accurate and hope CPR all the best, not only for themselves but also the best of all for the tourism industry on the CNMI.

David M. Sablan

Papago, Saipan

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY	
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 10 to 20 mph		Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 10 to 20 mph		Mostly cloudy with a 30 percent chance of showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	
86°	77°	86°	77°	85°	76°	86°	76°	86°	77°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



PICTURE TIME: 7:49 AM, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2021

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180. Northeast winds and a few showers were over the Marianas this morning. A weak trough will cause partly sunny skies for part of the day.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html>
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
 - Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
 - Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

onds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mp and, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at <http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html> and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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MICRONESIA			▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	85° / 79°	
Palau	Thunderstorms	85° / 79°	
Yap	Thunderstorms	85° / 79°	
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	85° / 80°	
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	86° / 78°	
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	86° / 78°	
Majuro	Thunderstorms	85° / 82°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:37 AM	5:51 PM
Tuesday	6:38 AM	5:51 PM
Wednesday	6:38 AM	5:52 PM
Thursday	6:39 AM	5:52 PM
Friday	6:39 AM	5:53 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	7:18 AM	6:40 PM
Tuesday	-	8:08 AM	7:32 PM
Wednesday	-	8:57 AM	8:25 PM
Thursday	-	9:42 AM	9:18 PM
Friday	-	10:25 AM	10:10 PM

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 12, 2021

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	7:20am	8:05am	2, 4, 6	UA116	5:30am	6:16am	2, 4, 6
UA117	9:50am	10:35am	1, 3, 5, 7	UA174	8:00am	8:46am	1, 3, 5, 7
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	Daily	UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	2, 5
				UA184	10:55pm	4:45am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
UA117/183	7:20am	9:50pm	2, 4, 6 via Guam	UA184/174	10:40pm	6:16am+1	5 via Guam
UA117/183	9:50am	9:50pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via Guam	UA184/174	10:40pm	8:46am+1	2 via Guam
				UA184/174	10:55pm	6:16am+1	1, 3 via Guam
				UA184/174	10:55pm	8:46am+1	4, 6, 7 via Guam
SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)				INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN			
7C3406	3:10PM	6:55PM	6	7C3405	8:30AM	2:10PM	6
TW9308	3:20PM	8:00PM	4, 5	OZ6233	9:00AM	2:30PM	6
OZ6243	4:00PM	7:40PM	6	TW9307	10:00AM	2:20PM	4, 5

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 18, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA				ROTA TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Daily	3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Daily
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Daily	3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Daily
1303	1:30PM	2:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri Daily	3103	1:30PM	3:00PM	Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri Daily
1304	3:30PM	4:00PM		3104	4:30PM	5:00PM	
ROTA TO GUAM				GUAM TO ROTA			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable	4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable
SAIPAN TO TINIAN				TINIAN TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable	2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily	2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily	2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
				2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
				2105	11:30	11:45	Daily
				2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
				2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
				2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
				2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
				2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
				2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
				2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

Business

Court allows Biden employer vaccine mandate to take effect

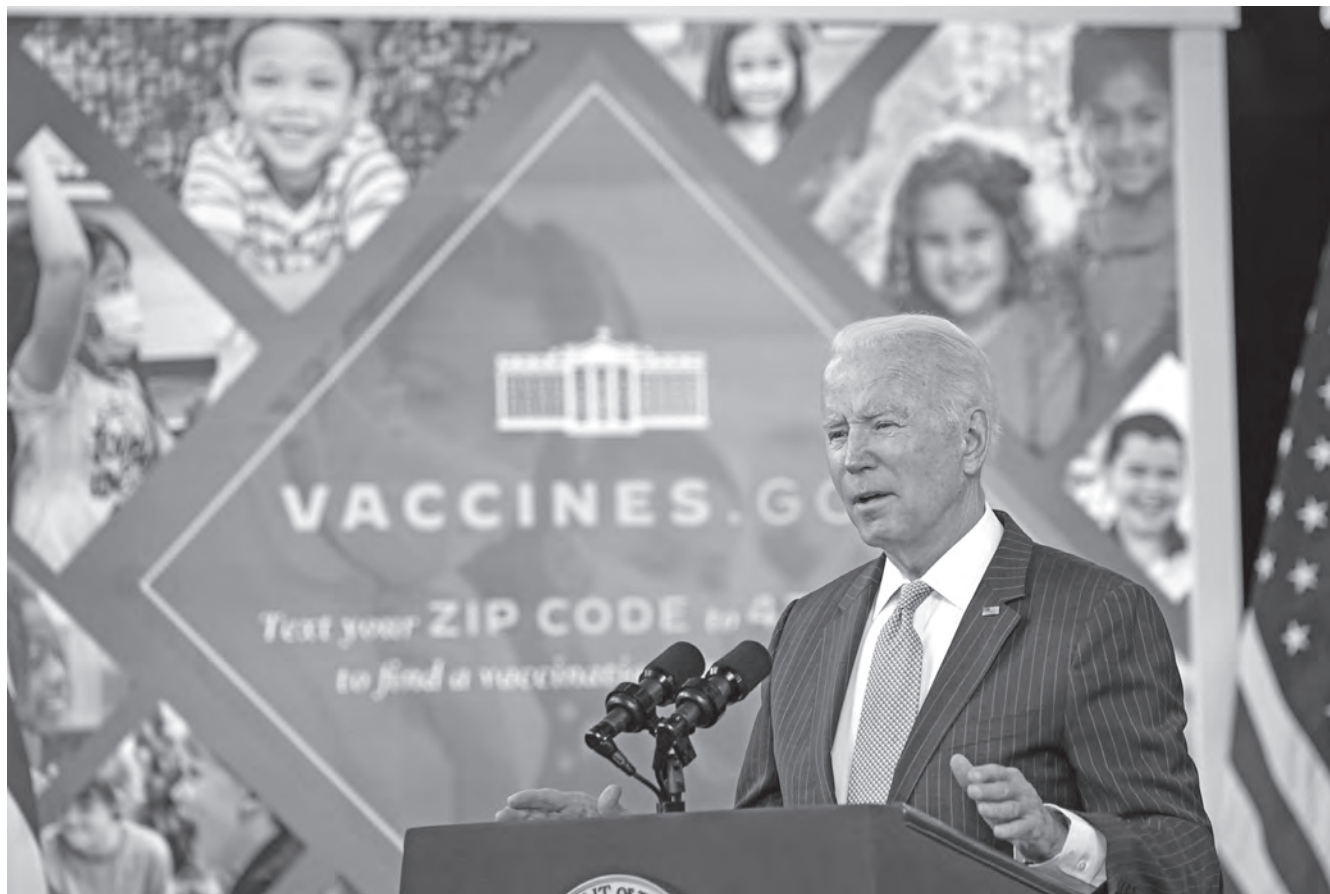
By GEOFF MULVIHILL and
ANDREW DeMILLO
ASSOCIATED PRESS

A federal appeals court panel on Friday allowed President Joe Biden's COVID-19 vaccine mandate for larger private employers to move ahead, reversing a previous decision on a requirement that could affect some 84 million U.S. workers.

The 2-1 decision by a panel of the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati overrules a decision by a federal judge in a separate court that had paused the mandate nationwide.

The mandate from the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration was to take effect Jan. 4. With Friday's ruling, it's not clear when the requirement might be put in place, but the White House said in a statement that it will protect workers: "Especially as the U.S. faces the highly transmissible Omicron variant, it's critical we move forward with vaccination requirements and protections for workers with the urgency needed in this moment."

Republican state attorneys



general and conservative groups said they would appeal Friday's decision to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Twenty-seven Republican-led states joined with conservative groups, business

associations and some individual businesses to push back against the requirement as soon as OSHA published the rules in early November. They argued the agency was not authorized to make the emer-

gency rule, in part because the coronavirus is a general health risk and not one faced only by employees at work.

The panel's majority disagreed.

"Given OSHA's clear and exercised authority to regu-

late viruses, OSHA necessarily has the authority to regulate infectious diseases that are not unique to the workplace," Judge Julia Smith Gibbons, who was nominated to the court by former President George W. Bush, a Republican, wrote in her ma-

President Joe Biden talks about the newly approved COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 5-11 from the South Court Auditorium on the White House complex in Washington, Wednesday, Nov. 3, 2021.

AP

majority opinion. "Vaccination and medical examinations are both tools that OSHA historically employed to contain illness in the workplace," she wrote.

Gibbons noted that the agency's authority extends beyond just regulating "hard hats and safety goggles." She said the vaccine requirement "is not a novel expansion of OSHA's power; it is an existing application of authority to a novel and dangerous worldwide pandemic."

She was joined in the majority decision by Judge Jane Branstetter Stranch, an appointee of former President Barack Obama, a Democrat.

The case was consolidated in the 6th circuit, which is dominated by Republican-appointed judges. Earlier this week, the circuit's active judges rejected a move to have the entire panel consider the case, on an 8-8 vote.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

People pressure governments worldwide to act on inflation

BARCELONA, Spain (AP)—Political pressure has led countries including Poland, Hungary and the U.S. to take steps such as instituting caps on gas prices, pledging money for poor households or releasing oil from strategic reserves. Spain was among places like Turkey seeing more intense efforts such as protests and work stoppages tied to complaints about inflation, which has surged as the global economy rebounded from the pandemic, increasing demand for smaller supplies of energy and snarling supply chains. While governments are taking action, they have few effective resources to bring meaningful, lasting relief, economists say, offering short-term aid that likely will do little to combat surging prices. That's up to central banks, some of whom have started raising interest rates to ease inflation.

SpaceX launches 52 Starlink satellites from California base

VANDENBERG SPACE FORCE BASE, Calif. (AP)—A SpaceX rocket carried 52 Starlink internet satellites into orbit from California early Saturday. The two-stage Falcon 9 rocket lifted off from coastal Vandenberg Space Force Base at 4:41 a.m. and arced over the Pacific. The Falcon's first stage returned and landed on a SpaceX droneship in the ocean. It was the 11th launch and recovery of the stage. The second stage continued into orbit and deployment of the satellites was confirmed, said launch commentator Youmei Zhou at SpaceX headquarters in Hawthorne, California. Starlink is a satellite-based global internet system that SpaceX has been building for years to bring internet access to underserved areas of the world. Saturday's mission was the 34th launch for Starlink, a constellation of near-

ly 2,000 satellites in low Earth orbit.

Netherlands 'going into lockdown again' to curb omicron

LONDON (AP)—Nations across Europe moved to reimpose tougher measures to stem a new wave of COVID-19 infections spurred by the highly transmissible omicron variant, with the Netherlands leading the way by imposing a nationwide lockdown. All non-essential stores, bars and restaurants in the Netherlands will be closed until Jan. 14 starting Sunday, caretaker Prime Minister Mark Rutte said at a hastily arranged press conference Saturday night. Schools and universities will shut until Jan. 9, he said. In what is surely to prove a major disappointment, the lockdown terms also rein in private holiday celebrations. Residents only will be permitted two visitors except for Christmas and New Year's, when four will be allowed, according to Rutte. "The Netherlands is going into lockdown again from tomorrow," he said, adding that the move was "unavoidable because of the fifth wave caused by the omicron variant that is bearing down on us."

Ex-CEO charged with embezzling \$15M to fund lavish lifestyle

STATESVILLE, N.C. (AP)—A former CEO has been charged with embezzling more than \$15 million from her employer and using stolen money to pay for a lavish lifestyle, including travel, jewelry and family weddings, according to federal prosecutors. Donna Osowitt Steele, of Taylorsville, North Carolina, also used stolen money to fund personal businesses run by her family, according to a court filing Friday by U.S. Attorney Dena King's office. Steele is charged with one count of wire fraud. Online court records don't list an attorney for her or a date for an initial court appearance.

OSHA vaccine mandate penalties to start Jan. 10

The Occupational Health and Safety Administration said Saturday that it would not issue citations tied to its coronavirus vaccination mandate before Jan. 10, so that companies have time to adjust to and implement the requirements.

The federal agency separately said there would be no citations of companies regarding its testing requirements before Feb. 9.

The announcement came after the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth District in Cincinnati decided on Friday that the

mandate for large employers could go forward, reversing a previous court decision made after 27 Republican-led states, conservative groups, business associations and some individual companies challenged the mandate.

OSHA said in a statement that it would not issue citations before the listed dates "so long as an employer is exercising reasonable, good faith efforts to come into compliance with the standard."

The mandate was previously slated to take effect Jan. 4.

Salvation Army official: Theft of toys no victory for Grinch

FARMINGTON, N.M. (AP)—Farmington-area residents of northern New Mexico donated gifts and money after somebody stole a Salvation Army van loaded with \$6,000 worth of toys for children, an official with the organization said Saturday.

"The Grinch will not have this victory," Salvation Army Lt. Christopher Rockwell told The Associated Press.

Business leaders and others began making donations after the marked van with gifts intended for more than 350 children was stolen Tuesday from outside a store, Rockwell said.

The donations included

"lots of toys, lots of clothing" as well as hygiene items and cash, certainly adding up to more than enough to replace the stolen items intended for children who are signed up for a distribution event Monday, Rockwell said. "We have like a waiting list ... so we could see what we have left over."

The generosity showed the "compassion and the hearts that people have for each other here," Rockwell said. "It's a massive blessing beyond comprehension."

Farmington police spokesperson Nicole Brown said Saturday an investigation into the theft continued. The van and

The Biden administration's vaccine requirement applies to companies with 100 or more employees and covers about 84 million U.S. workers. Employees who are not fully vaccinated have to wear face masks and be subject to weekly COVID-19 tests. There are exceptions, including for those who work outdoors or only at home.

Administration officials estimate that the mandate will save 6,500 lives and prevent 250,000 hospitalizations over six months. (AP)

toys had not been recovered, and no arrest had been made or a motive determined, she said.

Rockwell said he suspected a pickpocket stole the van's keys from a Salvation Army worker who was in the store.

"I think it was just some evil, unscrupulous person who just saw an opportunity," Rockwell said. "Desperate, I understand that, but to do this is just beyond imagination."

The Salvation Army is a Christian organization founded in 1865 in London. It is active in more than 100 countries and is best known for its charity shops, homeless shelters and disaster relief.

Nation

Hits 'keep coming': Hospitals struggle as COVID beds fill

DETROIT (AP)—Hospitals across the country are struggling to cope with burnout among doctors, nurses and other workers, already buffeted by a crush of patients from the ongoing surge of the COVID-19 delta variant and now bracing for the fallout of another highly transmissible mutation.

Ohio became the latest state to summon the National Guard to help overwhelmed medical facilities. Experts in Nebraska warned that its hospitals soon may need to ration care. Medical officials in Kansas and Missouri are delaying surgeries, turning away transfers and desperately trying to hire traveling nurses, as cases double and triple in an eerie reminder of last year's holiday season.

"There is no medical school class that can prepare you for this level of death," said Dr. Jacqueline Pflaum-Carlson, an emergency medicine specialist at Henry Ford Health System in Detroit. "The hits just keep coming."

The national seven-day average of COVID-19 hospital admissions was 60,000 by Wednesday, far off last winter's peak but 50% higher than in early November, the government reported. The situation is more acute in cold-



Natalie Balli, 71, and her twin sister, Linda Calderon, background right, watch TV as they rest in their beds in a COVID-19 unit at Providence Holy Cross Medical Center in Los Angeles, Friday, Dec. 17, 2021. **AP**

weather regions, where people are increasingly gathering inside and new infections are piling up.

New York state reported Saturday that slightly more than 21,900 people had tested positive for COVID-19 the day before, a new high since tests became widely available. Consequences of the latest surge have been swift in New York City: The Rockettes Christmas show was scratched for the season; some

Broadway shows canceled performances because of outbreaks among cast members; and "Saturday Night Live" announced it was taping without a live audience and with only limited cast and crew.

"We are in a situation where we are now facing a very important delta surge and we are looking over our shoulder at an oncoming omicron surge," Dr. Anthony Fauci, chief medical adviser to President Joe Biden, said of the two CO-

VID-19 variants.

At AdventHealth Shawnee Mission, a hospital near Kansas City, Missouri, chief medical officer Dr. Lisa Hays said the emergency department is experiencing backups sometimes lasting for days.

"The beds are not the issue. It's the nurses to staff the beds. ... And it's all created by rising COVID numbers and burnout," Hays said. "Our nurses are burnt out."

Experts attribute most of the

rise in cases and hospitalizations to infections among people who have not been inoculated against the coronavirus. The government says 61% of the U.S. population is fully vaccinated.

Dr. Steve Stites, chief medical officer at University of Kansas Health System in Kansas City, Kansas, said the "pandemic of the unvaccinated" continues to swamp the hospital and its workers.

"There's no place to go. Our staff are tired. We're going to run out of travelers," Stites said, referring to visiting health care workers, "and omicron is at our doorstep. This is a tornado warning to our community."

Ohio's National Guard deployment is one of the largest seen during the pandemic, with more than 1,000 members sent to beleaguered hospitals especially in the Akron, Canton and Cleveland areas.

As of Friday, 4,723 people in the state were hospitalized with the coronavirus, a number last seen about a year ago, Gov. Mike DeWine said. Some staffers were taking only short breaks before punching in for second shifts, he added.

Health systems elsewhere that are doing somewhat better are nervously eyeing the arrival of the omicron variant and girding themselves for the impact.

ACROSS THE NATION

Biden marks anniversary of 1972 car crash that killed wife

GREENVILLE, Del. (AP)—President Joe Biden on Saturday commemorated the 49th anniversary of the car crash that killed his first wife and infant daughter, visiting their graves at the Saint Joseph on the Brandywine Roman Catholic Church. Their deaths occurred just after Delaware voters elected Biden to the Senate in 1972 and the fatal car crash became a defining moment that has shaped his persona and career. His sons Beau and Hunter, just under 4 and 3 at the time, were seriously injured but survived the crash. His wife Neilia and 13-month-old daughter Naomi died after their car was broadsided while they were en route to pick up a Christmas tree. The tragedy haunted him at the start of his Senate career and has been a touchstone of his presidency, with Biden recently opening a speech in Minnesota by noting how two of that state's former senators helped him cope.

How COVID-19 upended Blinken's diplomatic mission

HONOLULU, Hawaii (AP)—U.S. Air Force Special Air Mission 50601 departed from Joint Base Andrews on the night of Dec. 9 with an ambitious journey ahead—an eight-day, around-the-world trip with America's top diplomat, Secretary of State Antony Blinken. But the diplomatic mission to Britain, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand would soon be upended by the global surge in coronavirus cases. At least three members of the traveling party tested positive for COVID-19 and forced the abrupt cancellation of the last stop and a frantic re-calculation of the remaining itinerary. The Air Force confirmed on Saturday that at least two members of its crew on the plane had tested positive for COVID. That followed the State Department's announcement that a journalist among the traveling press corps had tested positive, which alarmed the rest of the party and resulted in the trip being cut short.

Washington state Sen. Doug Ericksen dies after COVID battle

SEATTLE (AP)—Washington state Sen. Doug Ericksen, a staunch conservative, has died at age 52. Ericksen's death Friday came weeks after he said he had tested positive for the coronavirus while in El Salvador, though his cause of death wasn't immediately released. The state Senate Republican Caucus confirmed his passing Saturday but did not say where he died. Ericksen, a Ferndale Republican, reached out to Republican colleagues last month saying he had taken a trip to El Salvador and tested positive for COVID-19 shortly after he arrived. Reasons for his visit were unclear. In a message to state House and Senate members, Ericksen asked for advice on how to receive monoclonal antibodies, which were not available in the Latin American nation. He soon arranged a medevac flight from El Salvador, former state Rep. Luanne Van Werven said. Van Werven said the next week that the senator was recovering at a Florida hospital. No information about his location or condition had since been released.

Fire damages huge QVC distribution center in North Carolina

ROCKY MOUNT, N.C. (AP)—A fire ripped through a distribution center in North Carolina for the QVC home-shopping television network early Saturday, causing extensive damage to the facility, officials said.

More than 300 employees were working at the facility near Rocky Mount when the fire was reported shortly after 2 a.m., The News & Observer reported. No injuries were immediately reported.

QVC representatives reported that all employees safely

evacuated the warehouse and were accounted for except for one who hadn't contacted family yet, according to Edgecombe County Manager Eric Evans. Earlier Saturday, Evans had said all of the center's employees appeared to be accounted for.

QVC said in a subsequent statement that it was working with local authorities to confirm the safety of all employees and contractors at the site. It said it had close to 2,000 "team members" working at the complex, spread over three shifts.

Evans said a "main section"

of the 1.2 million-square-foot (365,000-square-meter) facility appears to be destroyed. Crews from nearly 45 fire departments were still fighting the blaze more than 12 hours after it began.

"They're working very hard to try to protect the remainder of that building," Evans said. "Significant loss, but we're very hopeful that it's not a total loss and that they'll be able to rebuild here."

The cause of the fire remains under investigation, according to Evans.

QVC tweeted a statement about the fire on Saturday, saying, "We are currently focused on our team. As we work to understand the full impact of this incident, including any impact to shipping and delivery, we'll share further details."

QVC Inc. is based in West Chester, Pennsylvania, and is a wholly owned subsidiary of Qurate Retail Inc.

The Rocky Mount Area Chamber of Commerce posted a Facebook message that said up to 2,500 families would be affected by the fire.

Governor: No one still missing in Kentucky after tornadoes

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—All of the people reported missing in Kentucky after tornadoes swept through the state last weekend have been accounted for, Gov. Andy Beshear said Saturday.

Beshear hailed the report by state emergency management officials and said he hoped it meant that no additional people in Kentucky would be found dead from the storm.

"How about a piece of good news today?" Beshear said at the beginning of a briefing Saturday on recovery efforts. "Right now, missing persons

based on this tornado event are at zero."

The Democratic governor said the 78 people killed in what he described as the most destructive tornado event in the state's history was still "a huge number of Kentuckians to lose."

"We mourn with their families," he said.

There was some confusion over the number of deaths, Beshear said, because his staff believes there have been 78 deaths, though state emergency management officials and the state health department put

the current count at 75.

Beshear said officials were working to resolve the discrepancy and added, "I hope they are right," referring to health and emergency management officials.

In Tennessee, meanwhile, officials have confirmed that a fifth person in that state died from storms that struck during the same weather system.

The Tennessee Emergency Management Agency says the additional death occurred in Lake County, where two other storm deaths also occurred. The remaining fatalities were

in Obion and Shelby counties, the agency said.

At least 92 people have been confirmed dead across multiple states after more than 40 tornadoes pummeled a wide area on Dec. 10 and 11.

In Kentucky, Beshear said help from the Federal Emergency Management Agency had been extended to six additional counties and that relief benefits provided for funeral expenses have been increased to \$10,000.

"They shouldn't have to have a cheap funeral for their loved one," he said. "That's not right."

Asia

Typhoon deaths in Philippines top 100, mayors appeal for aid

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The governor of an island province in the central Philippines said Sunday at least 63 people died in the devastation wrought by Typhoon Rai in more than half of the towns that managed to contact him, bringing the death toll in the strongest typhoon to batter the country this year to at least 112.

Gov. Arthur Yap of Bohol province said 10 others were missing and 13 injured, and suggested the fatalities may still considerably increase with only 33 out of 48 mayors able to report back to him due to downed communications. Officials were trying to confirm a sizable number of deaths caused by landslides and extensive flooding elsewhere.

In statements posted on Facebook, Yap ordered mayors in his province of more than 1.2 million people to invoke their emergency powers to secure food packs for large numbers of people along

with drinking water, which he said was an urgent problem since water stations were down during power outage.

After joining a military aerial survey of typhoon-ravaged towns, Yap said “it is very clear that the damage sustained by Bohol is great and all-encompassing.”

He said the initial inspection did not cover four towns, where the typhoon blew in as it rampaged on Thursday and Friday through central island provinces. The government said about 780,000 people were affected, including more than 300,000 residents who had to evacuate their homes.

At least 39 other typhoon deaths were reported by the disaster-response agency and the national police. Officials on Dinagat Islands, one of the southeastern provinces first pounded by the typhoon, separately reported 10 deaths just from a few towns, bringing the overall fatalities so far to 112.

President Rodrigo Duterte flew to the region Saturday

and promised 2 billion pesos (\$40 million) in new aid. Aides said the president will visit Bohol on Sunday.

At its strongest, the typhoon packed sustained winds of 195 kilometers (121 miles) per hour and gusts of up to 270 kph (168 mph), one of the most powerful in recent years to hit the disaster-prone archipelago, which lies between the Pacific Ocean and the South China Sea.

Floodwaters rose rapidly in Bohol’s riverside town of Loboc, where residents were trapped on their roofs and trees. They were rescued by the coast guard the following day. On Dinagat Islands, an official said the roofs of nearly all the houses, including emergency shelters, were either damaged or blown away.

At least 227 cities and towns lost electricity, which has since been restored in only 21 areas, officials said, adding three regional airports were damaged, including two that remain closed.



A resident salvages parts of her home damaged due to Typhoon Rai in Talisay, Cebu province, central Philippines on Saturday, Dec. 18, 2021. AP

Gas explosion in sewer kills 12 in Pakistan

KARACHI, Pakistan (AP)—A powerful gas explosion in a sewage system in Pakistan’s largest city, Karachi, killed at least 12 people and injured 11 others Saturday, police and a health official said.

Police spokesman Sohail Jokhio said the blast was apparently caused when something ignited gas that had accumulated in the sewer beneath a local bank building in the Shershah neighborhood of the port city.

The powerful blast destroyed the HBL bank building. Video footage aired

by local television stations showed the entire structure of the Shershah branch was damaged. The floor was blown out and furniture was mired in sewage from below. The impact of the blast damaged several cars parked nearby and threw debris onto a gas station on the other side of the building. Jokhio said it was not yet clear what ignited the gas but a team of explosives experts had been summoned to investigate.

Dr. Sabir Memon at Trauma Center Karachi said 10 people were killed and 13 others were injured, at least

three critically. He said several injured were sent to the intensive care unit.

Senior police officer Sarafar Nawaz Shaikh later said two of the injured died at the hospital raising the death toll to 12.

Shaikh said investigators were not ruling out the possibility the explosion was the work of militants. “We will come up with a clear version once the explosives experts complete their job,” he said.

Witness Mohammad Sameer said he was in the crowded bank branch moments before the blast but left shortly before the explosion.

World



Despite rainy weather, Duesseldorf’s city centre is well frequented despite the Corona rules for retailers, shortly before Christmas in Duesseldorf, Germany, Saturday, Dec. 18, 2021. MALTE KRUEDEWIG/DPA VIA AP

WHO: Omicron detected in 89 countries, cases doubling fast

VIENNA (AP)—The Omicron variant of the coronavirus has been detected in 89 countries, and COVID-19 cases involving the variant are doubling every 1.5 to 3 days in places with community transmission and not just infections acquired abroad, the World Health Organization said Saturday.

Omicron’s “substantial growth advantage” over the delta variant means it is likely to soon overtake delta as the

dominant form of the virus in countries where the new variant is spreading locally, the U.N. health agency said.

WHO noted that omicron is spreading rapidly even in countries with high vaccination rates or where a significant proportion of the population has recovered from COVID-19.

It remains unclear if the rapid growth of omicron cases is because the variant evades existing immunity, is inherently

more transmissible than previous variants, or a combination of both, WHO said.

Other major questions about omicron remain unanswered, including how effective each of the existing COVID-19 vaccines are against it. Conclusive data also does not exist yet on how ill omicron makes COVID-19 patients, the health agency said.

WHO first labeled omicron a variant of concern on Nov. 26.

WORLD BRIEFS

12 killed in Guatemalan village plagued by land disputes

GUATEMALA CITY (AP)—A dozen people were slain Saturday in a Guatemalan village that has been involved in a years-long territorial dispute with a nearby town, police said. The National Civil Police said the 12 dead included men, women and children, but gave no details on what happened in the village of Chiquix, in western Guatemala near the Mexico border. A local police officer was killed earlier in the week in the same area, and violence has occurred there before. Residents of Chiquix have quarreled over water and land access with inhabitants of the town of Santa Catarina Ixtahuacan. Negotiations between the two sides have so far yielded few results.

4 killed, 2 wounded in gun attack on Mexico holiday party

MEXICO CITY (AP)—Four men were killed in north-central Mexico Saturday when armed assailants burst into a home where a holiday-season party was being held and opened fire. Prosecutors in the state of Guanajuato said two other men were wounded in the shooting. The attack occurred before dawn Saturday in the

town of Cuernamero, near the border with Jalisco state. There was no immediate information on a possible motive in the attack. However, the Jalisco drug cartel has been fighting to take over territory in Guanajuato from local gangs. Guanajuato is a farming and industrial state with the highest number of homicides in Mexico.

Reports: Crane collapse in northern Italy’s Turin kills 3

ROME (AP)—Two building cranes collapsed on a street in the northern Italian city of Turin, killing three construction workers and injuring passersby Saturday, firefighters and news reports said. Two of the workers died at the scene and their bodies were extracted from the twisted blue metal, firefighters said in a tweet. The third was taken to a local hospital, where he was pronounced dead, Turin daily newspaper La Stampa said.

Iran says ambassador in Yemen has coronavirus, recalls him

TEHRAN, Iran (AP)—Iran said Saturday it is recalling its ambassador in Yemen for medical treatment as he has been infected by the coronavirus. The Foreign Ministry said on its website that Ambassador

Hassan Irloo was in need of urgent medical care after being infected for several days, and was en route to Iran. The announcement comes after the Wall Street Journal reported Friday that Irloo was being removed over strains with the Houthi rebels, who are backed by Iran and hold Yemen’s capital, Sanaa. The report quotes anonymous officials from the Mideast and Western officials, and said Irloo showed no signs of having Covid-19.

Russia sends nuclear-capable bombers on patrol over Belarus

MOSCOW (AP)—Russia sent a pair of nuclear-capable long-range bombers to patrol the skies over Belarus on Saturday, a mission intended to underline close defense ties between the two allies amid tensions with the West. The Russian Defense Ministry said the two Tu-22M3 strategic strike bombers practiced “performing joint tasks with the Belarusian air force and air defense.” Su-30 fighter jets that Russia has supplied to Belarus escorted the bombers. Saturday’s four-hour patrol marked Russia’s third such mission in Belarus since last month and took place amid Western concerns over a Russian troop buildup near Ukraine’s border.

Health & Wellness

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Caring at home for yourself and others suffering from COVID-19

Providing care at home for a person sick with COVID-19? Or caring for yourself at home? Understand when emergency care is needed and what you can do to prevent the spread of infection.

If you have coronavirus (COVID-19) and you're caring for yourself at home or you're caring for a loved one with COVID-19 at home, you might have questions. How do you know when emergency care is needed? How long is isolation necessary? What can you do to prevent the spread of germs? How can you support a sick loved one and manage your stress? Here's what you need to know.

At-home treatment

Most people who become sick with COVID-19 will only experience mild illness and can recover at home. Symptoms might last a few days, and people who have the virus might feel better in about a week. Treatment is aimed at relieving symptoms and includes rest, fluid intake and pain relievers.

However, older adults and people of any age with existing medical conditions should call their health care provider as soon as symptoms start. These factors put people at greater risk of becoming seriously ill with COVID-19.

Follow the health care provider's recommendations about care and home isolation for yourself or your loved one. Talk to the health care provider if you have any questions about treatments. Help the sick person get groceries and any medications and, if needed, take care of his or her pet.

It's also important to consider how caring for a sick person might affect your health. If you are older or have an existing medical condition, such as heart or lung disease or diabetes, you may be at higher risk of serious illness with COVID-19. You might consider isolating yourself from the sick person and finding another person to provide care.

Emergency warning signs

Carefully monitor yourself or your loved one for worsening symptoms. If symptoms appear to be getting worse, call the health care provider.

The health care provider might recommend use of a home pulse oximeter, especially if the ill person has

risk factors for severe illness with COVID-19 and COVID-19 symptoms. A pulse oximeter is a plastic clip that attaches to a finger. The device can help check breathing by measuring how much oxygen is in the blood. A reading of less than 92% might increase the need for hospitalization. If the health care provider recommends a pulse oximeter, make sure you understand how to use the device properly and when a reading should prompt a call to the provider.

If you or the person with COVID-19 experiences emergency warning signs, medical attention is needed immediately. Call 911 or your local emergency number if the sick person can't be woken up or you notice any emergency signs, including:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent chest pain or pressure
- New confusion
- Bluish lips or face
- Inability to stay awake
- Pale, gray or blue-colored skin, lips or nail beds—depending on skin tone

Protecting others if you're ill

If you're ill with COVID-19, you can help prevent the spread of infection with the COVID-19 virus.

Stay home from work, school and public areas unless it's to get medical care.

Avoid using public transportation, ride-sharing services or taxis.

Stay isolated in one room, away from your family and other people, as much as possible. This includes eating in your room. Open windows to keep air circulating. Use a separate bathroom, if possible.

Avoid shared space in your home as much as possible. When using shared spaces, limit your movements. Keep your kitchen and other shared spaces well ventilated. Stay at least 6 feet (2 meters) away from

your family members.

Clean often-touched surfaces in your separate room and bathroom, such as doorknobs, light switches, electronics and counters, every day.

Avoid sharing personal household items, such as dishes, towels, bedding and electronics.

Wear a face mask when near others. Change the face mask each day.

If wearing a face mask isn't possible, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or elbow when coughing or sneezing. Afterward, throw away the tissue or wash the handkerchief.

Frequently wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

Protecting yourself while caring for someone with COVID-19

To protect yourself while caring for someone with COVID-19, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) recommend:

Keep your hands clean and away from your face. Frequently wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after being in close contact or in the same room as the sick person. If soap and water aren't available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.

Wear a face mask. If you need to be in the same room with the person who is ill and he or she isn't able to wear a face mask, wear a face mask. Stay at least 6 feet (2 meters) away from the ill person. Don't touch or handle your mask while you are using it. If your mask gets wet or dirty, replace it with a clean, dry mask. Throw away the used mask and wash your hands.

Clean your home frequently. Every

day, use household cleaning sprays or wipes to clean surfaces that are often touched, including counters, tabletops and doorknobs. Avoid cleaning the sick person's separate room and bathroom. Set aside bedding and utensils for the sick person only to use.

Be careful with laundry. Don't shake dirty laundry. Use regular detergent to wash the sick person's laundry. Use the warmest setting you can. Wash your hands after putting clothes in the dryer. Thoroughly dry clothes. If you are handling clothing that has been soiled by the sick person, wear disposable gloves and keep the items away from your body. Wash your hands after removing the gloves. Place dirty gloves and masks in a waste bin with a lid in the sick person's room. Clean and disinfect clothes hampers and wash your hands afterward.

Be careful with dishes. Wear gloves when handling dishes, cups or utensils used by the sick person. Wash the items with soap and hot water or in the dishwasher. Clean your hands after taking off the gloves or handling used items.

Avoid direct contact with the sick person's bodily fluids. Wear disposable gloves and a face mask when providing oral and respiratory care and when handling stool, urine or other waste. Wash your hands before and after removing your gloves and mask. Don't reuse your mask or gloves.



Avoid having unnecessary visitors in your home. Don't allow visitors until the sick person has completely recovered and has no signs or symptoms of COVID-19.

Ending isolation or quarantine

Talk to the health care provider about when to end home isolation, especially if you have a weakened immune system. The CDC recommends the following guidelines for ending home isolation after you think or know you had COVID-19.

If you won't have a test to determine if you're still contagious, you can leave your sick room or home if at least 10 days have passed since your symptoms started, at least 24 hours have passed with no fever without the use of fever-reducing medicine and other symptoms are improving. Loss of taste and smell might last for weeks or months after recovery but shouldn't delay ending isolation.

If you'll be tested to determine if you're still contagious, your doctor will let you know when you can be around others based on your test results. Most people don't need testing to decide when they can be around others.

The CDC also recommends that, as the sick person's caregiver, you quarantine for 14 days and watch

for common signs and symptoms of COVID-19, such as fever, cough or shortness of breath. Other options may include ending quarantine after 10 days if you don't have symptoms and won't get tested or ending quarantine after 7 days if you receive a negative test result on day 5 or later. But continue to watch for symptoms for 14 days.

However, if you've been caring for someone with COVID-19, you don't need to stay home if:

- You've been fully vaccinated and have no symptoms of COVID-19.
- You've had COVID-19 within the last three months, recovered and remain without symptoms of COVID-19.

Coping with caregiving stress

As you or your loved one recover, seek emotional support. Stay connected to others through texts, phone calls or videoconferences. Share your concerns. Avoid too much COVID-19 news. Rest and focus on enjoyable activities, such as reading, watching movies or playing online games.

As you take care of a loved one who is ill with COVID-19, you might feel stressed too. You might worry about your health and the health of the sick person. This can affect your ability to eat, sleep and concentrate, as well as worsen chronic health problems. It may also increase your use of alco-

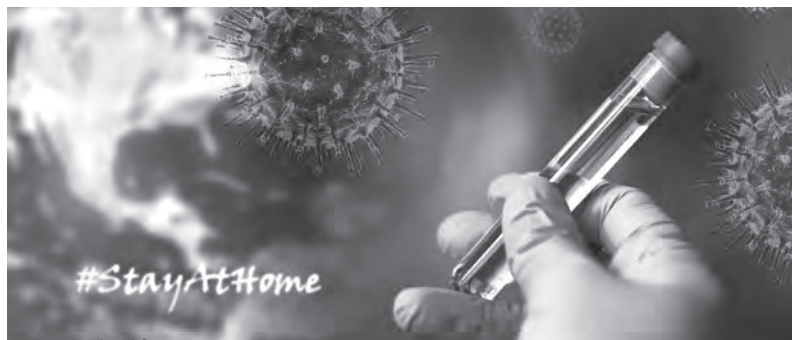
hol, tobacco or other drugs.

If you have a mental health condition, such as anxiety or depression, continue with your treatment. Contact your doctor or mental health professional if your condition worsens.

To care for yourself, follow these steps:

- Maintain a daily routine, including showering and getting dressed.
- Take breaks from COVID-19 news, including social media.
- Eat healthy meals and stay hydrated.
- Exercise.
- Get plenty of sleep.
- Avoid excessive use of alcohol and tobacco.
- Stretching, breathe deeply or meditate.
- Focus on enjoyable activities.
- Connect with others and share how you are feeling.
- Caring for yourself can help you cope with stress. It will also help you be able to support your loved one's recovery. (*Mayo Clinic News Network*)

For more information and all your COVID-19 coverage, go to the Mayo Clinic News Network and [mayoclinic.org](https://www.mayoclinic.org). (*Mayo Clinic News Network is your source for health news, advances in research and wellness tips.*)



Life & Style

‘Spider-Man: No Way Home’ snags eye-popping \$50M in previews

NEW YORK (AP)—For the first time since the pandemic began, the box office is booming. “Spider-Man: No Way Home” grossed \$50 million in Thursday previews alone, a stunning start for a movie set to break pandemic records.

Sony Pictures’ “No Way Home” scored the third-largest preview total ever, trailing only those for “Avengers: Endgame” (\$60 million) and “The Force Awakens” (\$57 million). Previews once featured only late-night screenings, but they have steadily moved earlier in the day; “No Way Home” began playing around 3 p.m. in

3,767 locations.

But there was no exaggerating the eye-popping total for the Marvel release, starring Tom Holland. “No Way Home” is on pace to be the first release of the pandemic to surpass \$100 million. It could go as high as \$150 million. The previous best of this year was also a Marvel-Sony release, “Venom: Let There Be Carnage,” which launched with \$90.1 million.

“Spider-Man: No Way Home” is managing to pack theaters even as the spreading omicron variant is forcing closures in the entertainment industry, including numerous



This image released by Sony Pictures shows Tom Holland in Columbia Pictures’ “Spider-Man: No Way Home.”
SONY PICTURES VIA AP

Broadway shows. As recently as last week, when Steven Spielberg’s “West Side Story” opened softly, the box office had been fitfully sputtering back to life.

But while some moviegoers, particularly older ticket-buyers, have been more reluctant, the younger, devoted Marvel fanbase has proven resistant to the pandemic challenges of moviegoing. With “No Way Home,” Marvel releases will make up five of the top six films of the year, including “Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings,” “Venom: Let There Be Carnage,” “Black Widow” and “Eternals.”

New Miss America first Alaskan, Korean American title holder

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP)—The newly crowned Miss America has made history, becoming both the first Korean American and the first Alaskan to hold the title in the competition’s 100-year history.

“I never could have imagined in a million years that I would be Miss America, let alone that I would be Miss Alaska,” a beaming Emma Broyles told The Associated Press on Friday in a Zoom call from Connecticut, where she won the competition about 12 hours earlier.

In fact, she was sure they had it wrong. The final two contestants were Broyles and Lauren Bradford, Miss Alabama, and Broyles said she was thinking Bradford was going to make an amazing Miss America.

“And then they said Alaska, and I said, ‘No way. Are you sure? Do you want to check

that card again?” she said before the emotion overtook her and she began crying tears of joy.

“I could not believe it,” Broyles said. “I am so, so grateful to everybody back at home who’s been supporting me for so long, and I’m so glad that I’m able to bring home the title of Miss America to the state of Alaska for the first time in history.”

The very first Miss America program began in 1921 as a beauty pageant in Atlantic City, New Jersey. However, Broyles is only the 94th Miss America.

The pageant, which has evolved away from the emphasis on looks to focusing on leadership, talent and communication skills, was not held last year because of the pandemic and it wasn’t held for several years in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

Broyles, 20, said her grand-



Miss Alaska Emma Broyles, center, reacts after being crowned Miss America at Mohegan Sun, Thursday, Dec. 16, 2021, in Uncasville, Conn.
AP PHOTO/JESSICA HILL

parents immigrated from Korea to Anchorage about 50 years ago, before her mother was born.

“Although my mom is full Korean, she was born and raised right in Anchorage, Alaska,” Broyles said.

The Miss America Organization “believes Emma is

the first Korean-American to win the crown,” spokesperson Matt Ciesluk said in a text message to the AP.

Her mother is a special education teacher at Service High School in Anchorage, the same school Broyles attended.

Broyles has chosen the Special Olympics for her social

impact initiative. Besides her mother’s position, her older brother, Brendan, has Down syndrome and competes in athletic events with Special Olympics Alaska.

“I’ve seen firsthand the impact that Special Olympics has on the families of people with intellectual disabilities. And I know how important Special Olympics is to our community here in Anchorage and here in Alaska, as well as the communities all over the country and all over the world,” she said.

Broyles said she looks forward to working with Special Olympics to promote inclusion, compassion and open-mindedness through sports.

“Getting to have this platform to speak about why inclusion is important during a time like this when our country is so divided, and to speak about why it’s important to be compassionate, why it’s important to be empathetic, why it’s important to keep an open

mind and to be willing to listen to those who aren’t like you or maybe have different opinions than you, I think that this is a time where we need that more than ever,” she said.

Broyles winning the Miss America title wasn’t the first barrier broken by an Alaska woman this year. Last summer, teenager Lydia Jacoby of Seward, Alaska, came from out of nowhere to win the women’s 100-meter breaststroke at the Tokyo Olympic Games. She became the first Alaskan to ever qualify for the Olympics in swimming, let alone win gold.

“I think it’s incredibly cool that Alaskan women are representing Alaska, representing our home state so well and getting the recognition I think we deserve,” Broyles said.

Along with her title, Broyles earned just over \$100,000 in college scholarships, which she calls a “life changing amount of money.”

Relationship flounders amid teen’s belligerent protests

DEAR ABBY: I have been dating “Mark” for 18 months. Four months ago, his 17-year-old daughter, “Hayley,” started disliking me -- my dog, my kids, anything having to do with me. She forbids me from going to Mark’s house when she’s there and has an emotional meltdown every time we see each other. She has major episodes whenever my name is mentioned and has become violent with her sister, “Lily,” Mark and me.

Last night, Lily told Hayley my kids and I were invited over for dinner (Hayley is going to be gone for a football game), and Hayley accused Lily of “ruining their family” for liking me. Mark had to separate them to protect his younger daughter.

The problem is, there are never any consequences for Hayley’s behavior. Mark keeps telling me she needs “time.” I have tried to end the relationship, but Mark insists we just need to stick it out. We had been talking about moving in together before Hayley went into this phase. Now everything is on pause, and our relationship has taken 10 steps backward.

How can I get over this and become comfortable rather than upset in our relationship? He keeps promising me he will make changes, but he doesn’t. Nothing is moving forward. Do I walk away or wait it out?

NO PROGRESS IN IOWA

DEAR NO PROGRESS: I wish you had mentioned what

the plans are for Hayley when she turns 18 and graduates from high school. Is college in her future? Will she get a job and continue living with her father? That Mark is unable to assert himself with Hayley is, to say the least, regrettable.

If you haven’t already done so, “suggest” to Mark that family counseling could help him get to the root of what has caused Hayley’s abrupt change of attitude. From what you have described, she may have severe emotional problems that require professional help.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: Occasionally when my husband goes running, I drop him off at the park while I do the grocery shopping. We agree to meet back at the drop-off spot in one hour. Occasionally, I’m late by maybe five minutes, and certainly no more than eight or nine. When this happens, my husband gets extremely angry, although the very first thing I do is apologize for being late.

Sometimes the grocery store line is long or there’s traffic in town. When he gets angry, he says, “Why can’t you do this simple thing?” and rants on and on despite my apologies. I never intend to be late; it happens only one out of five times. Besides, I’m doing the shopping, which benefits us both.

It hurts me when he does this and I tell him so. Honestly, I feel it is verbal abuse. We are self-employed and work together. Our relationship is generally more or less OK. What

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



are your thoughts?

UNAPPRECIATED IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR UNAPPRECIATED: My “thought” is that your impatient and immature husband should provide his own transportation if he wants to go running in the park rather than berate you for things that are beyond the control of his chauffeur and grocery shopper.

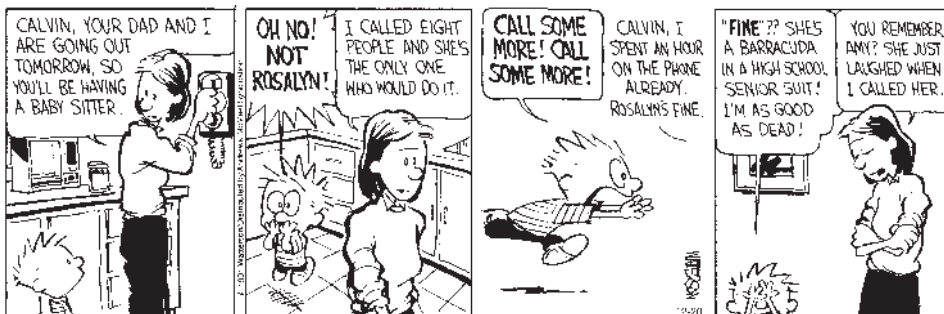
■■■

For everything you need to know about wedding planning, order “How to Have a Lovely Wedding.” Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Wedding Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



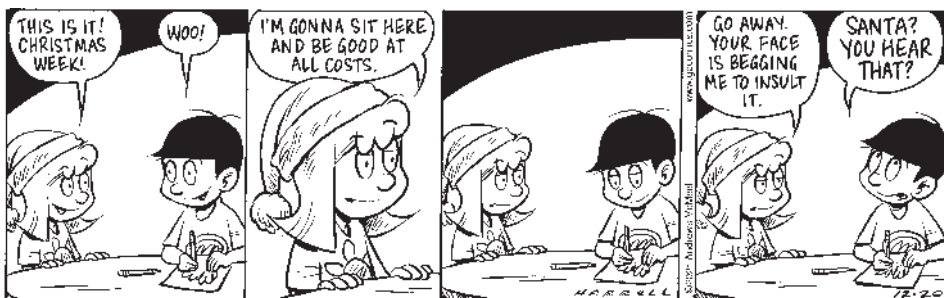
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



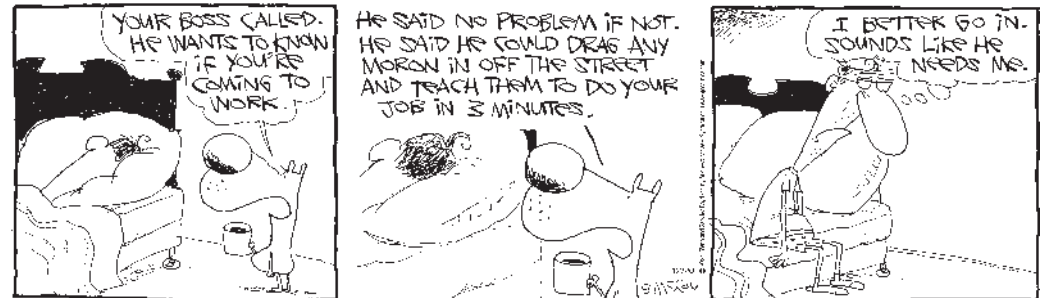
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 iPhone
4 Rainbow
7 Visibility
11 Panorama
13 Standard
14 Baltic Sea
15 "Beetle Bailey" dog
16 Compass dir.
17 Supplies with staff
18 Harbor platform
20 "Mercy Mercy Me" singer Marvin
22 Crucial
24 Process
28 Self-service meals
32 Italian wine
33 Mr. Stravinsky
34 Medico
36 Caprice
37 Test for Noah

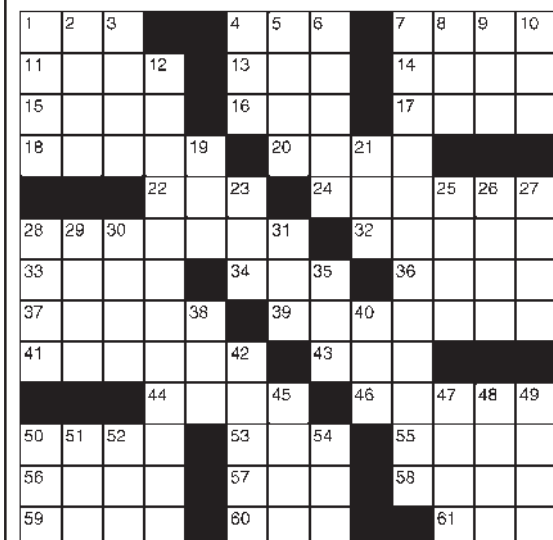
DOWN

1 Acknowledge
2 Essence
3 Anti-fur org.
4 Mimic
5 Pealed
6 Coffee enhancer
7 Local parade honoree
8 Okla-homa city
9 Buddhist sect
10 Triage ctrs.
12 Tele-commute, perhaps
19 Charge
21 "Of course"
23 Since Jan. 1
25 "Funny!" poet
26 Roman
27 Show-room model
28 "Back to the Future" bully
29 Wrinkled fruit
30 Chuckle-head
31 Drunkard
35 Corn core
38 Ruby of Hollywood
40 Cleaning cloth
42 Ambition
45 U2 lead singer
47 Really pesters
48 Fixes a squeak
49 Pub orders
50 Bowler, e.g.
51 Sashimi fish
52 Cariou of "Blue Bloods"
54 Snooze

Solution time: 26 mins.

M	O	C	H	A	T	A	D	H	I	E
A	B	R	A	M	H	R	S	A	N	E
V	I	O	L	A	R	O	L	L	B	A
W	O	N	T	O	N	C	O	I	N	K
A	L	B	A	R	A	O	A	T	E	S
R	O	A	R	U	T	U	R	N		
C	A	R	E	L	L	S	E	E	M	E
C	A	K	E	D	H	E	H	N	A	B
A	R	I	A	D	C	R	E	V	I	
T	O	O	L	B	A	R	R	A	B	I
H	M	S	T	I	E	O	N	A	I	R
Y	A	K	S	S	S	N	E	R		S

Last Friday's Answer 12/20



STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-800-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Azie Tesfai, 29; Jonah Hill, 38; David Cook, 39; Nicole de Boer, 51.

Happy Birthday: Formulate ideas and implement change. Don't wait for others to do things for you or take charge of your life. Look for what moves you, and focus on using your skills masterfully. You will excel. Put your energy where it counts, and follow your heart wherever it takes you. Be the one to satisfy your needs and make a difference. Your numbers are 4, 11, 25, 28, 34, 39, 42.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): You'll meet with opposition if you are insistent on doing everything your way. A little compromise will go a long way when dealing with someone who can influence the outcome. Choose your battles wisely, and focus on honoring promises. **

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Spend more time nurturing relationships and taking care of your work responsibilities, and you will feel confident moving forward. Knowing you can finish what you start and handle personal matters without a hitch will put your mind at ease. Romance is encouraged. ****

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Don't make an emotional financial move. Iron out any foreseeable problems before you jump into a joint venture. A sincere attitude and an open mind will help you develop a workable plan that can easily fit into your schedule. ***

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Address issues that concern others. Offer suggestions to encourage others to take care of

their responsibilities, leaving you more time to address problems directly linked to your personal life and meaningful relationships. Romance is on the rise. ***

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Stop overthinking and analyzing; start enjoying what life has to offer. Worrying about things you cannot change is a waste of time. Reach out to people who lift your spirits and put a smile on your face. ***

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Trust what's tried and true. Someone will mislead you if given a chance. Concentrate on personal growth, physical improvement and altering your lifestyle to suit your needs. Get along with everyone, but be sure to do your own thing. ****

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): An emotional matter will escalate if you cannot compromise or come to terms with what others want to do. Take care of responsibilities on your own to avoid interference and inconvenience. Put your energy where it will make the most difference. **

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Gather information, and pursue what you want to do. Touch base with people who make you think, and offer helpful suggestions. Limit your spending, drinking and indulgence. Look for unique alternatives that suit your lifestyle. *****

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Recognize what you are up against, and make changes that will help you navigate your way to stardom. Select the people and the path that feel most comfortable, and nothing will stand be-

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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tween you and getting what you want. ***

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Share memories and dreams with the people you love, and you'll find common ground that will encourage better relationships. Put in extra time if it will help get you closer to the goal you set for yourself. Romance is favored. ***

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Say what's on your mind, and deal with unfinished business. A responsible attitude and quick pace will diminish any doubt others may have regarding your ability to get things done. An unexpected gesture will stir up emotions. ***

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Handle situations uniquely, and you'll make an impression on someone influential. Enforcing positive change will show your ability to take charge and live up to your promises. A financial gain or bonus will take you by surprise. *****

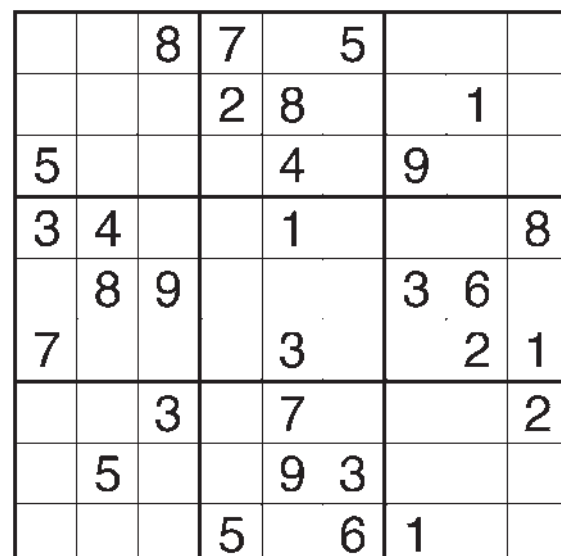
Birthday Baby: You are intelligent, helpful and original. You are generous and kind.

☾: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ☼: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ☼☼: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ☼☼☼: Aim high; start new projects. ☼☼☼☼: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green



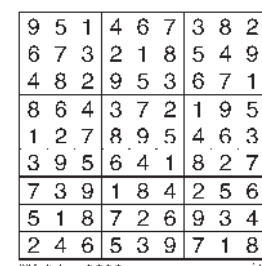
Difficulty Level ★

12/20

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer



Difficulty Level: ****

WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them. Circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

FASHION NOVA Solution: 6 letters

N C E V I T C A R R I V A L S
E A N O I H S A F E P D C I A
E R I A I D E M L L B O O A N
W D L H G R M F A L L M M N D
O I N S G I F I O O I I F S A
L B O S N A D U R Y N W O N L
L O R E W S R E Z I S R O S
A D D Q S E U D A O M E T S L
H Y E U W I E T R C T C R A T
C S R I E I R F E A A E U E R
A U N N N U L H E R H T K S E
S I R A S E G W G T R C L E N
U T E V E A S O A I A O I S D
A B S C E J L E V J H D S R Y
L S E O H S L E E P W E A R Y

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Active, Arrivals, Beanie, Blouse, Bodysuit, Cardi B, Cardigan, Cargo, Casual, Code, Color, Comfort, Cozy, Curve, Denim, Fashion, Fleece, Halloween, High Rise, Jacket, Jeans, Leather, Media, Mini, Nail, New, Online, Order, Plaid, Returns, Richard, Saghan, Sale, Sandals, Seasons, Sequin, Shoes, Silk, Size, Sleepwear, Sweater, Swim, Trendy, Virtual, Vogue, Waffle

Last Friday's Answer: Pancakes
To purchase WONDERWORD books, visit www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

Gilgeous-Alexander hits 3 at buzzer, Thunder beat Clippers



OKLAHOMA CITY (AP)—Shai Gilgeous-Alexander created space to hit his winner. Then he created space for his celebration dance.

Gilgeous-Alexander hit a 27-foot, step-back 3-pointer at the buzzer to give the Oklahoma City Thunder a 104-103 victory over the Los Angeles Clippers on Saturday night.

On Wednesday night, Gilgeous-Alexander hit a 30-footer with 1.4 seconds to tie the game against New Orleans, but Devonte Graham drained a 60-foot heave as time expired for the winner.

This time, Gilgeous-Alexander hit the game's last dramatic shot, and his teammates mobbed him as he ran downcourt. He then broke into a dance in which waved his arms. He called it the "Lamar Odom Dance," for the former NBA player Gilgeous-Alexander said he got it from. Gilgeous-Alexander said he and Thunder forward Darius Bazley had seen footage of Odom doing the dance and liked it.

"Baze and I always thought it was like, so cool," Gilgeous-Alexander said. "And I told him (Bazley) the first time I hit my real game-winner with the buzzer going down, I was going to do the dance. And then I forgot to do it. And then as soon as I saw Baze on the court, it came back to my head."

Lu Dort, who scored 29 points after sitting out Oklahoma City's previous game with a sprained left ankle, said Gilgeous-Alexander definitely wanted his room to show off his moves.

"He actually pushed me and started dancing," Dort said, laughing.

Gilgeous-Alexander's footwork, not his arms, got him the clean look on the final shot. He was able to step away from Los Angeles' Nicolas Batum.

"I looked at the clock and there was like three seconds left after (Mike Muscala) had got it to me," Gilgeous-Alexander said. "And I knew like where I caught it was like, perfect for my comfort zone shot I want to shoot. I tried to make it look like I was driving, and then I got into my step back that I work on every day. And as soon as I let go, it felt good."

Gilgeous-Alexander scored 18 points, and rookie Josh Giddey had eight points, a career-high 18 rebounds and 10 assists.

Luke Kennard scored a season-high 27 points for Los Angeles. Terance Mann had 18 points, and Reggie Jackson added 16 points and 10 assists. Los Angeles forward Paul George, the team's leading scorer with 25 points per game, sat out with a sprained right elbow.

Magic 100, Nets 93

In New York, Robin Lopez had 20 points and 10 rebounds and the Orlando Magic beat the short-handed Brooklyn Nets 100-93 on Saturday night to snap a seven-game losing streak.

Gary Harris added 17 points, Chuma Okeke had 15, and Franz Wagner 14 to help the Magic improve to 6-25.

Patty Mills led the Nets with 23 points. David Duke Jr. had 18 points and 14 rebounds, Blake Griffin added 17 points, and Cam Thomas had 15. Eastern Conference-leading Brooklyn dropped to 21-9. The Nets had won four in a row.

Brooklyn entered the game with 10 players in COVID-19 protocol, after returning star guard Kyrie Irving and MVP candidate Kevin Durant were placed into protocols Saturday.

The team announced about an hour before the game rookie forward Day'Ron Sharpe would join them, as well as De'Andre Bembry, Bruce Brown, Jevon Carter, LaMarcus Aldridge, James Johnson, Paul Millsap, and James Harden. The Nets signed James Ennis III and Shaquille Harrison prior to the game.



Oklahoma City Thunder guard Shai Gilgeous-Alexander (2) shoots a game-winning 3-point shot in front of Los Angeles Clippers forward Justise Winslow (20) at the end of an NBA basketball game, Saturday, Dec. 18, 2021, in Oklahoma City. AP

Raptors 119, Warriors 100

In Toronto, Fred VanVleet had 27 points and 12 assists, Scottie Barnes scored 21 points and Toronto beat the short-

handed Golden State.

Golden State was without Steph Curry (rest), Draymond Green (right hip), Andre Iguodala (right knee), Otto Porter Jr. (left foot) and Andrew

Wiggins (left knee). The five returned to California after a victory Friday night in Boston rather than risking COVID-19 exposure, and a potential quarantine, in Canada.

Durant, Irving among 10 Nets in health and safety protocols

NEW YORK (AP)—Kyrie Irving's return to the Brooklyn Nets is starting with a trip to the NBA's health and safety protocols—and Kevin Durant is joining him.

The Nets' outbreak worsened Saturday when they announced both stars were in protocols, giving them a league-high 10 players on the injury report for that reason.

"These are unforeseen circumstances and I hate to say it, it's almost like we've gone back to six months, a year ago unfortunately with the cases rising," Nets general manager Sean Marks said.

Durant already was scheduled for a night off to rest Saturday against Orlando on the opening night of a back-to-back. Instead, he became ineligible to play anyway when he was added to the injury report.

The Nets decided Friday that Irving would rejoin them for practices and road games, though he remains ineligible to play at home because he hasn't met New York City's COVID-19 vaccine mandate for athletes playing in the city's public venues.

The Nets determined before the season that Irving wouldn't be a part-time player and wouldn't be with the team unless he could play in all their games. But concerned with the heavy burden

Durant has faced—his 37 minutes per game are second in the league—and needing to add a body while they keep losing them, they said the point guard would be back.

"Several months ago we made a decision that was based around what was best for the team," Marks said. "What was best for the team at that point was continuity and I think we all see that continuity right now over the course of the last week and whatever the future looks like maybe out the window for a while, and we've got to navigate that as best we can."

Irving first needed to get tested to be cleared to play and apparently he either tested positive or had an inconclusive result. The Nets also acknowledged the risk of bringing Irving back at this time, with Marks saying he hadn't spoken to him about whether he intended to get vaccinated.

"There's also a risk for Kyrie when a guy comes in and if they're not vaccinated," Marks said. "I don't want to get into those type of discussions but that's a risk for him coming into this environment, not just the team and so forth. But we're all well aware of the status and his status and moving forward and how we'll navigate this as best we can."

James Harden, LaMarcus Aldridge, DeAndre' Bembry, Bruce Brown, Jevon Carter, Paul Millsap, James Johnson and rookie Day'Ron Sharpe all are listed as out because of the protocols.

Needing to have eight players to start a game, the Nets scrapped their plan to rest Patty Mills and said he would be available. They also signed swingman James Ennis III and guard Shaquille Harrison to 10-day contracts.

Elsewhere, Chicago previously had 10 players in health and safety protocols, causing two of their games this week to be postponed. Three of them were cleared as of Friday, putting the Bulls on track to resume Sunday against the Lakers.

Brooklyn's woes make Orlando's seem minor. The Magic still have five players out for protocols.

Also Saturday, Cavaliers rookie forward Evan Mobley entered health and safety protocols.

Mobley has been a major reason for Cleveland's unexpected and surprising start this season. The No. 3 overall draft pick has been as good as advertised while helping the Cavs go 18-12 and surge into fourth spot in the Eastern Conference standings.

Mobley missed four games

Jonathan Kuminga scored 26 points for Golden State.

Celtics 114, Knicks 107

In Boston, Josh Richardson scored a season-high 27 points, Jayson Tatum had 25 and Boston beat New York Knicks with each team missing six players because of COVID-19 protocols.

Jaylen Brown added 23 points for Boston. After blowing a 15-point halftime lead, the Celtics won for just the second time in their last six games.

Evan Fournier, who played with Boston last season, led the Knicks, matching his season-high with 32 points. New York has lost five of six. Kemba Walker, who also played with Boston the last two seasons, started for the Knicks and scored a season-high 29 points before fouling out.

Cavaliers 119, Bucks 90

In Milwaukee, Cedi Osman scored 23 points, Darius Garland had 22 points and Cleveland beat short-handed Milwaukee to extend its winning streak to six.

Garland made 10 of 13 shots to pace a Cavaliers offense that shot 50% from the floor and made 16 of 45 3-point attempts.

Jordan Nwora led Milwaukee with 28 points on 11-of-21 shooting. The Bucks were without any of their regular starters.

Wizards 109, Jazz 103

In Salt Lake City, Bradley Beal scored a season-high 37 points and Kentavious Caldwell-Pope hit a late 3-pointer to help Washington beat Utah.

With Washington up 105-103, the Wizards' Raul Neto won a jump ball with Mitchell, and Kentavious Caldwell-Pope hit a 3-pointer with 11.6 seconds to play. Neto had 15 points and a career-high seven rebounds, and Caldwell-Pope finished with 13 points to help the Wizards snap a four-game losing streak.

Donovan Mitchell scored 32 points for Utah. The Jazz lost on consecutive nights after winning eight straight.

Rockets 116, Pistons 107

In Detroit, Christian Wood had 21 points and eight rebounds and Houston sent Detroit to its 14th straight loss.

The streak matches the longest single-season skid in Pistons history, including 14-game streaks in 1979-80 and 1993-94. They had a 21-game streak spread between the 1979-80 and 1980-81 seasons.

Saddiq Bey had 23 points for Detroit.

Taylor helps Colts turn table on Patriots with 27-17 victory



INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—Jonathan Taylor understood the challenge long before he suited up Saturday night.

He anticipated defensive mastermind Bill Belichick would stack the line of scrimmage and dare the Indianapolis Colts to beat them with the passing game as he's done to so many other opponents.

This time, Taylor turned the tables. The second-year running back rushed for 170 yards, including a 67-yard touchdown run with 2:01 left to seal Indy's 27-17 victory over New England.

"I think it just says we're a team that's going to come in and play 60 minutes, four quarters of hard football and we're not going to give up till the clock hits zero," Taylor said after logging 29 carries. "It was just all out effort."

Taylor's performance may have changed their season season, too. By winning for the fifth time in six games and snapping an eight-game losing streak against a bitter rival, Indy (8-6) solidified its playoff hopes with another crucial conference victory.

He's run for a score in 11 straight games, tying Hall of Famer Lenny Moore for the longest streak in franchise history.

Nobody inside the Colts locker room was surprised by his stat line — or the epic highlight of Taylor breaking through the line, eluding a tackle and sprinting to the front corner of the end zone..

"I almost called a pass there



Indianapolis Colts outside linebacker Darius Leonard (53) celebrates along with teammates Kenny Moore II (23) and Khari Willis after intercepting a pass during the first half of an NFL football game against the New England Patriots Saturday, Dec. 18, 2021, in Indianapolis. AP

because I thought we needed a first down and I talked it over with Marcus Brady and said 'No, let's call one more pass,'" coach Frank Reich said referring to his offensive coordinator. "There's no way anybody's catching him."

For the Patriots (9-5), it marked the end of a seven-game winning streak and dropped them out of the No. 1 slot in the AFC playoff chase. And it was mostly of their own making.

A bevy of uncharacteristic mistakes put the Pats in a 20-0 hole and Taylor's long run

made sure they couldn't come all the way back.

The game had a little bit of everything—drama, physical play, shouting matches, even a fight that led to the ejections of Patriots safety Kyle Dugger and Colts receiver Michael Pittman Jr.

But Indy won this one by stealing a page out of Belichick's playbook — using the ground game to chew up the clock and closing it out with a back-breaking play in the waning minutes. It was Indy's first win over New England since 2009.

"I've said it like five times, I can say it another five times," Belichick said. "We didn't do anything well enough to win tonight."

Taylor and the Colts had the upper hand from the start. They opened the second series with seven straight running plays before Taylor took a direct snap, handed off to Carson Wentz and then Wentz flipped the ball to Nyheim Hines for an 8-yard scoring pass and a 7-0 lead.

Matthew Adams followed that by blocking Jake Bailey's punt that E.J. Speed recov-

ered in the end zone for a 14-0 lead—New England's largest deficit since a Week 3 loss to New Orleans. Two field goals made it 20-0 early in the third.

"It seems like they just had good force on the play," New England special teams star Matthew Slater said. "That's tough when you give up plays like that, it's going to be hard to win. We spotted a team 20 points at their place. Good luck trying to win. There's no excuse to play like that."

Rookie quarterback Mac Jones finally answered with a 12-yard TD pass to Hunter

Henry and after Nick Folk's short field goal made it 20-10, Jones hooked up with Henry for a 7-yard scoring pass with 2:21 left.

Belichick opted to kick it deep and two plays later, Taylor closed it out.

Patriots played without top rusher Damien Harris (hamstring) and lost linebacker Ja'Whaun Bentley (ankle) and receiver Nelson Agholor (head injury). Receiver N'Keal Harry needed help to get off the field late.

Center Ryan Kelly missed his second straight game after being activated off the reserve/COVID-19 list Tuesday. Reich explained Kelly was out because of a personal matter.

New England's NFL record streak of scoring in the first half of 99 consecutive games ended. The Patriots also failed to score 30 points against Indy for the first time in 10 games, leaving them in a tie with Kansas City, which did it nine straight times against Denver from 1964-68 in the AFL. Jones was 26 of 45 with 299 yards, two touchdowns and two interceptions in the first road loss of his career.

Speed became the first NFL player to record two touchdowns off blocked punts in one season since Ed Reed in 2003. Indy added two more totals to its league-leading total and now has at least one takeaway in 15 consecutive games. Wentz was 5 of 12 with 57 yards with one TD and one interception as the Colts rushed for 226 yards on 39 carries.

Kelce's OT touchdown gives Chiefs 34-28 win over Chargers

INGLEWOOD, Calif. (AP)—Travis Kelce, Patrick Mahomes and the Kansas City Chiefs have faced their share of challenges this season. The two-time defending AFC champions are peaking at the right time for another playoff push.

Kelce had a career-high 191 receiving yards and scored on a 34-yard pass from Mahomes in overtime as the Chiefs rallied for a 34-28 victory over the Los Angeles Chargers on Thursday night.

Kelce caught a tying 7-yard touchdown pass with 1:16 left in the fourth quarter, then ended the game with his catch-and-run in overtime. On first-and-10, Kelce pulled in Mahomes' pass at the 30 and eluded two tackles en route to the end zone, where he was swarmed by teammates.

"I don't think I've ever been part of a walk-off touchdown or anything like that, so to be in that moment, find him underneath and him making such a dynamic play where, I mean, he cut back, ran by

people," said Mahomes, who completed 31 of 47 for a season-high 410 yards with three touchdowns and an interception. "You think he's old. He can't run by people. But he's still running by people. And he got in the end zone."

The Chiefs were 3-4 at the end of October but have won seven straight to improve to 10-4 and go up by two games in the AFC West.

Kelce had been held to six total receptions the past two games, but he broke out in a big way. He had five of his 10 catches for 142 yards in the fourth quarter and overtime. He also had a 69-yard reception that led to Tyreek Hill's 1-yard touchdown and a 2-point conversion that tied it at 21.

"Everybody is talking about him losing a step, he looked fast to me," Chiefs coach Andy Reid said after the 32-year-old Kelce had his sixth career game with at least 10 catches. "His endurance down the stretch for an elder statesman—he's not over

the hill—his acceleration is something."

Mahomes bounced back after a costly fourth-quarter interception led to Austin Ekeler's touchdown and gave the Chargers a 21-13 advantage. He was 10 of 16 for 197 yards and three TDs after the turnover.

"Obviously it (stinks) in the moment. I mean, I promise you I felt as bad as anyone about that throw and that situation, and knew how bad it looked. But you will get another chance and you better be ready for that moment," Mahomes said.

Justin Herbert gave the Chargers a 28-21 lead with 2:19 remaining on a 8-yard TD pass to Keenan Allen, but couldn't make it hold up. It is the second straight season the Chiefs have come to the Chargers' Hollywood Park home and won in overtime.

"The goal is always to score. We needed to put up points, and we got in the end zone, and that was our mission," Herbert said. "We

would have loved to have been able to run the clock down and not have any time, but this is the NFL, and you have to get in the end zone."

Los Angeles' defeat came after a terrifying injury to tight end Donald Parham. The 24-year-old appeared to lose consciousness after slamming his head on the turf in the first quarter. He was helped off on a stretcher and taken to a hospital, where the team said he is in stable condition.

Herbert threw two touchdowns and ran for another score, but the Chargers (8-6) came up empty on three red-zone drives. Herbert completed 22 of 38 passes for 236 yards and an interception.

"I really liked the way we managed the entire game tonight. It didn't go down for us today, but we gave ourselves an opportunity. We just didn't finish the game off defensively," Chargers coach Brandon Staley said.

The Chargers fell behind 10-0 early in the second quar-

ter before scoring on two straight drives to take a 14-10 lead at halftime. Herbert scored on a 1-yard keeper off left end and then connected with Jalen Guyton for a 4-yard TD on the next drive.

The Chiefs benefited off Chargers' mistakes for their first 10 points. After Los Angeles turned it over on downs, Kansas City went 95 yards in 11 plays, culminating in Michael Burton's 7-yard run up the middle.

The Chiefs then turned Anthony Hitchens' interception of Herbert into points on Harrison Butker's 30-yard field goal.

Hill had 12 receptions for 148 yards and a TD. It is his fourth game this season with at least 11 catches.

Ekeler scored a touchdown for the sixth straight game with a 2-yard run off left end to extend the lead to 21-13 early in the fourth quarter. The TD came after Uchenna Nwosu tipped Mahomes' screen pass intended for Clyde Edwards-Helaire at the KC 4 and returned it 2 yards.

It is the third time since

1994 a Chargers player has reached the end zone in at least six consecutive games. LaDainian Tomlinson had a seven-game streak in 2004 and Natrone Means had a six-game run in 1994.

The Chargers could have had at least a 20-10 lead at halftime had Staley opted for a field goal instead of going for it on fourth down. Andre Roberts took the opening kickoff 75 yards and Los Angeles drove to the 5 before turning it over on downs on four straight incompletions by Herbert.

The Chargers could have kicked a field goal on the last play of the first half, but Herbert couldn't connect with Allen on fourth-and-goal from the 1.

Early in the fourth quarter, Los Angeles had second-and-goal, but Ben Niemann recovered Joshua Kelley's fumble at the 2.

The Chiefs also were not immune to red-zone failures. They were down 14-13 and had fourth-and-goal at the 2 when Mahomes' pass to Mecole Hardman was incomplete.

TABA meeting tomorrow to decide fate of finals

By MARK RABAGO

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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The Tinian Amateur Basketball Association will have an officers meeting at 10am tomorrow at the Tinian Youth Center to decide the fate of the Island-wide Men's Bud Light Basketball League finals that was postponed last Nov. 26 as the

island recorded its first cases of COVID-19.

"We will be having our meeting on Tuesday about the Island-wide Men's Bud Light Basketball League finals between Team Kio and Rampage and third place pitting Team CNMI and Devil Dog Warriors," said TABA president Christopher SN King.

He added there's no definite date yet on the resumption of the finals and battle for third and the meeting is to assess if TABA can arrange the games under the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force's strict mitigation protocols.

After more than a month of postponement, TABA finally

got on with the playoffs of the Island-wide Men's Bud Light Basketball League last Nov. 22, but it proved to be short but sweet due to the pandemic reaching Tinian's shores a couple of days after.

The first game of the Tinian caging semifinals saw undefeated Team Kio punch the first finals ticket with a 97-82 victory over Team CNMI. They will be joined in the championship by Rampage a few hours later after they defeated Devil Dog Warriors, 65-58, in the second game.

Team Kio's Robert Reyes led all scorers with 29 points in the demolition of Team CNMI, while Dustin Sablan

added 26 markers of his own. Dennis Borja and Louise Malignon paced Team CNMI in the loss with 22 and 20 markers, respectively.

Wesley Walker was the high-point man for Rampage with 25 points and he was ably supported by the 13 points of Leo Pascua. Devil Dog Warriors' losing cause was led by the 23 points of Jake Montgomery with Damon Kada and Zjonti Kubinski adding 14 and 11 points, respectively.

The rest of the teams making up the Island-wide Men's Bud Light Basketball League for 2021 are Power Builders, Ko Bees, RNV Construction, and SMA Flyers.



Tinian Amateur Basketball Association president Christopher SN King, left, has called for an officers meeting to decide the resumption of the Island-wide Men's Bud Light Basketball League finals at 10am tomorrow at the Tinian Youth Center. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Brooklyn	21	9	.700	—
Boston	15	15	.500	6
Philadelphia	15	15	.500	6
Toronto	14	15	.483	6½
New York	13	17	.433	8

Southeast Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Miami	18	12	.600	—
Charlotte	16	15	.516	2½
Washington	16	15	.516	2½
Atlanta	14	15	.483	3½
Orlando	6	25	.194	12½

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	17	10	.630	—
Cleveland	19	12	.613	—
Milwaukee	19	13	.594	½
Indiana	13	18	.419	6
Detroit	4	24	.143	13½

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Memphis	19	11	.633	—
Dallas	14	14	.500	4
San Antonio	11	17	.393	7
Houston	10	20	.333	9
New Orleans	10	21	.323	9½

Northwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Utah	20	9	.690	—
Denver	15	14	.517	5
Minnesota	14	15	.483	6
Portland	12	18	.400	8½
Oklahoma City	9	19	.321	10½

Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Phoenix	23	5	.821	—
Golden State	24	6	.800	—
L.A. Clippers	16	14	.533	8
L.A. Lakers	16	14	.533	8
Sacramento	12	18	.400	12

NFL STANDINGS

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
New England	9	5	0	.643	367	227
Buffalo	7	6	0	.538	363	229
Miami	6	7	0	.462	254	288
e-N.Y. Jets	3	10	0	.231	226	397

South

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Tennessee	9	4	0	.692	324	290
Indianapolis	8	6	0	.571	398	300
e-Houston	2	11	0	.154	177	356
e-Jacksonville	2	11	0	.154	180	340

North

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Baltimore	8	5	0	.615	304	284
Cincinnati	7	6	0	.538	354	293
Cleveland	7	6	0	.538	278	289
Pittsburgh	6	6	1	.500	272	322

West

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Kansas City	10	4	0	.714	385	296
L.A. Chargers	8	6	0	.571	379	370
Denver	7	6	0	.538	275	228
Las Vegas	6	7	0	.462	283	360

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Dallas	9	4	0	.692	380	287
Philadelphia	6	7	0	.462	337	291
Washington	6	7	0	.462	266	324
N.Y. Giants	4	9	0	.308	232	310

South

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Tampa Bay	10	3	0	.769	410	297
Atlanta	6	7	0	.462	245	353
New Orleans	6	7	0	.462	304	285
Carolina	5	8	0	.385	257	282

North

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Green Bay	10	3	0	.769	328	272
Minnesota	6	7	0	.462	344	333
Chicago	4	9	0	.308	231	332
e-Detroit	1	11	1	.115	213	354

West

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Arizona	10	3	0	.769	366	254
L.A. Rams	9	4	0	.692	366	293
San Francisco	9	4	0	.538	329	301
Seattle	5	8	0	.385	272	262

e-Eliminated from playoffs

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Baby Got Track members in full gallop to the finish line of Northern Marianas Athletics' Annual Christmas Island Relay last Saturday.

MARK RABAGO

BABY

From Page 20

He added that the Christmas Island Relay was actually the first time they all congregated as a group.

"At least running is one community event we can do regardless if we met each other or we met each other the first time, we ran for the same purpose. Honestly I'm really glad that despite the COVID-19 outbreak, I feel Run Saipan and NMA really did a good job."

Run Saipan Team B completed the Top 3 in the Christmas Island Relay after Run Saipan president Edward Dela Cruz, Sildrey Veloria, Tania Tan, Reylynn Sapong, and barefoot runner Chong Nam Lee completed the race in 1:33:56.

stroke and technique was correct. It is so respectable. Also there were eight DQ or disqualified. It means I think it's good to understand that COVID-19 is raging in the world. In that situation, I believe it's amazing that we did our best to prevent infection and we were able to participate in the race safely. Regardless of the result, I think CNMI swimmers are all winners," added Kimura.

After Litulumar, Juhn Tenorio made his 2021 debut in the nationals after posting a 12-5-2 win-loss-draw record. Borja saw action in all the two games of Navarro College in the Nationals. The Bulldogs, however, were eliminated after setting for draws against Seminole State College (0-0) and Snow College (2-2).

The NMI player is thankful to Navarro College, her teammates, and their coaches for having the opportunity to play in the collegiate ranks in

"It was great and I think everyone had fun today. It was really a great and momentous experience for Run Saipan because it's the first time as an official running organization that Run Saipan was part of the Christmas Island Relay. We originally had a total of five teams but because of injuries and COVID-19 we got dropped down to like three. I say it's still a good start for our club. Still 15 runners in total."

Dela Cruz said he's relieved that in-person racing returned after a nearly three-month sabbatical caused by the community recent surge of COVID-19.

"I'm just happy because the last time we had a face-to-face run was last September and after that we kept doing just virtual because of the COVID. So

thank everyone for the support back home!" said the 17-year-old also from MHS.

Kimura said Tenorio's 100m backstroke time is comparable to the Japan Inter-High School Championship's qualifying time (59.04) and his reaction time was an outstanding 0.49. "It is second place in the world!" he said.

In his heat, Tenorio beat Alguliyev Rashad (AZE), Ahmmed Juwel (BAN), Almarzooqi Ahmed (UAE),

men's 100m backstroke.

"Juhn had a big target in this competition. It was to cut 1:00. No one could cut 1:00 in 100m backstroke ever in CNMI swimming. Splendidly, Juhn cut 1:00 as he marked 58.85!" said Kimura.

Tenorio's response was a little more subdued than his coach.

"I felt very relieved after my race was over because a lot was on the line for me in this one race. I'm glad that our hard work as a team paid off. I

her first two years of being away from Saipan and for the chance to continue to improve her skills. She added that he is excited for what's ahead of her as she suits up for the Aggies.

"I am extremely grateful to be continuing my soccer career along with my educational goals. I am excited to be in a new atmosphere with an amazing program and coach," Borja said.

The proud product of the

Northern Mariana Islands Football Association's grassroots program will be coached by Josh Davis, who took the reigns at the OPSU this year after serving as associate head coach at the University of North Dakota in the NCAA Division I.

Before moving to the Aggies, Borja—a member of Paire Football Club's youth and women's teams—played 27 games with Navarro Col-

I'm really thankful for coach Robin Sapong and Northern Marianas Athletics for still being able to pull this off with COVID-19 protocol mitigations. I'm really happy and all the runners are really happy. A lot of runners were contacting me the last month asking me whether the Island Relay will be cancelled or is it gonna stop and I said 'No, NMA is gonna go strong' and as you can see everybody is happy here that we've had an in-person race after a long time," he said.

The Run Saipan president also took time to plug the club's next running event, the Fastest Mile Road Race set for Dec. 31.

"So the Island Relay is a team event for 1 mile, now Run Saipan will host the Fastest 1 Mile Road Race individual solo event. So, if you're not happy with your time you have Dec. 31 to challenge everybody else on Beach Road."

Results of the Christmas Island Relay youth and solo run divisions will be published in the next issues of *Saipan Tribune*.

and Imaan Ali (MDV).

Jinnosuke Suzuki and Asaka Litulumar made their debuts in the 15th FINA World Swimming Championships last Saturday. Results of their swims will be reported in tomorrow's issue of *Saipan Tribune*.

Aside from the national swimmers and Kimura also part of the CNMI delegation in Abu Dhabi are Northern Mariana Islands Swimming Federation representatives Richard Sikkell and Hiroko Tenorio.

lege and scored two goals in her last finals six games with the Bulldogs. With the NMI, Borja played for the youth and women's national teams that competed in the East Asian Football Federation and Asian Football Confederation-sanctioned tournaments. She last donned the Commonwealth colors in July 2019, scoring one goal in the CNMI's 3-0 victory against Guam in the Marianas Cup.



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Gilgeous-Alexander hits 3 at buzzer, Thunder beat Clippers

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Baby Got Track wins Christmas Island Relay

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Baby Got Track drew inspiration from Sir Mix-A-Lot's smash 1992 hit and left other competitors behind to win the Northern Marianas Athletics' Annual Christmas Island Relay last Saturday.

The five-some of Lily Muldoon, Dixie Mendenhall, Michael Denevan, Kate Wilson, and Ali Nelson completed the 13.7-mile long race from the Pacific Islands Club Saipan in San Antonio to the Last Command Post in Marpi in a time of 1:29:15.

Muldoon, who served as team captain, said her teammates at Baby Got Track were simply the best.

"The women and one man are awesome. This is our first Christmas Island Relay. It was a great and what a beautiful day. The weather was perfect. The best part of it is having a team race and having a relay where you actually have teammates is glorious and way more fun and not virtual," said the 36-year-old Department of Public Health director.



Muldoon, who is also a Commonwealth Health Center Emergency Department physician, said the genesis of the team was plain and simple.

"We were looking for the fastest people on island...we just trained individually and dedicate the victory to each other."

Coming in second to Muldoon and company is Run Saipan Team A skippered by Micronesian Games gold medal-winning weightlifter Angel Nicolas.

San Nicolas, Rex Pixley, Tiana Cabrera, Leowell Cristobal, and Keith Ketola crossed the finish line in 1:33:13.

"Everyone pitched in their hard work and everyone gave it their all. We left nothing in the gas tank," said San Nicolas.

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Baby Got Track's Lily Muldoon, Dixie Mendenhall, Kate Wilson, and Ali Nelson carry Michael Denevan after the team finished first in last Saturday's Annual Christmas Island Relay from Pacific Islands Club Saipan in San Antonio to the Last Command Post in Marpi. **MARK RABAGO**



A screen grab from Oklahoma Panhandle State University's twitter account shows the Aggies welcoming their new player Guinevere Borja (11). **CONTRIBUTED PHOTO**

Borja commits to new collegiate team

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER



Many-time national player Guine Borja will continue her collegiate soccer career after committing to the Oklahoma Panhandle State University.

With the OPSU, Borja will now be competing in the National Association

of Intercollegiate Athletics. The 21-year-old completed her two seasons with the Navarro College in the National Junior College Athletic Association before jumping to the NAIA where her new squad is grouped under Sooner Athletics Conference with nine other teams. The NAIA is an athletics association for colleges and universities in North America and has 249 member

See BORJA on Page 19

Juhn, Shoko achieve targets in debuts

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The CNMI National Swimming Team finally made its debut in Day 2 of the 15th FINA World Swimming Championships last Friday inside the cavernous Etihad Arena in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.



Shoko Litulumar was the first to plunge in the pool as she competed in the women's 50m breaststroke. National coach Hiroyuki Kimura said coming into the event, he gave Litulumar a target to cut 40 seconds

from her best time in the women's 50m breaststroke.

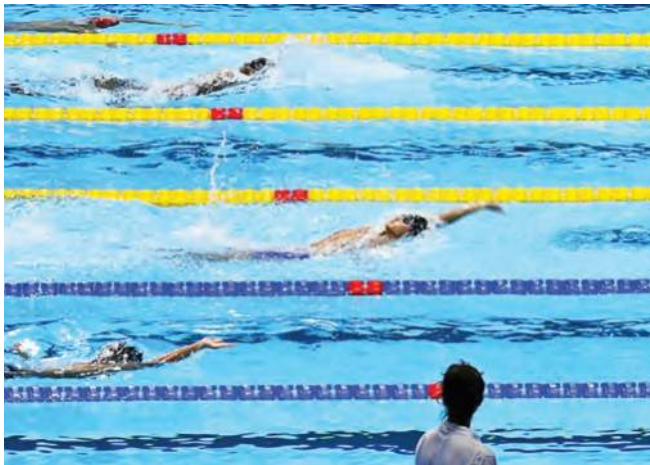
It was mission accomplished as the 14-year-old also Marianas High School student swam like a dolphin possessed and touched the tile in 39.91.

"My first race was a successful swim. I reached my goal so I am happy," said Litulumar after.

Kimura couldn't hide his excitement after Litulumar achieved the target.

"Shoko broke the 40-second barrier and it's so thrilling. More than three years Shoko never swam the 50m breaststroke. So, time estimation was so difficult for me, but I set her target to cut 40

See JUHN on Page 19



Juhn Tenorio, center, in action in the 100m backstroke of the 15th FINA World Swimming Championships last Friday in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. **CONTRIBUTED PHOTO**



Shoko Litulumar in action in the 50m breaststroke of the 15th FINA World Swimming Championships last Friday in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. **CONTRIBUTED PHOTO**